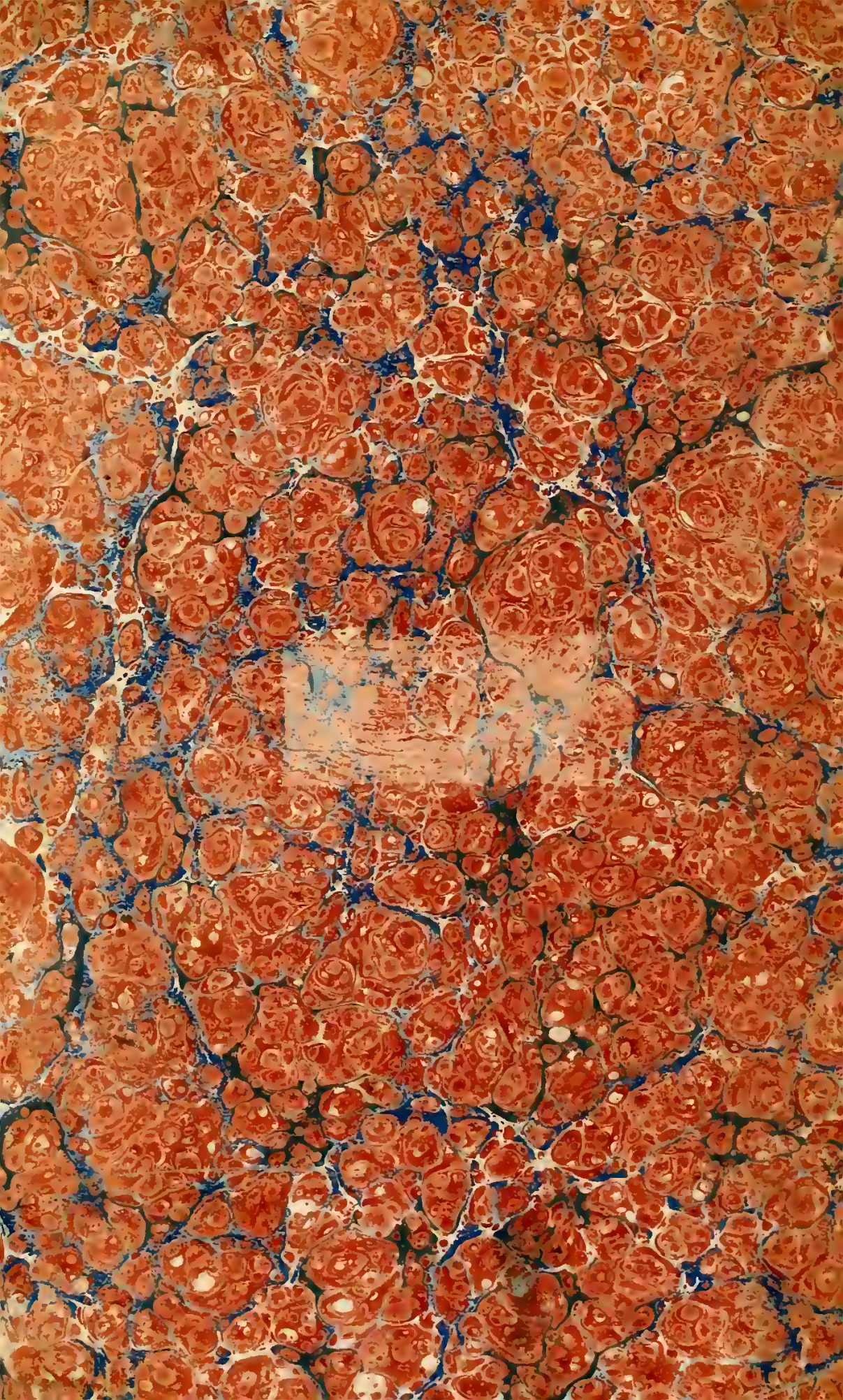

6112

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME DU DEFFAND.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall Street.

THE

UNPUBLISHED

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

Marie Anne (de Vichy Chamrond)

MADAME DU DEFFAND, de la Lande

WITH

D'ALEMBERT, MONTESQUIEU, THE PRESIDENT HENAULT,
THE DUCHESS DU MAINE, MESDAMES DE STAAL,
DE CHOISEUL, THE MARQUIS D'ARGENS,
THE CHEVALIER D'AYDIE, *&c.*

FOLLOWED BY THE

LETTERS OF VOLTAIRE TO MADAME DU DEFFAND.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH,
BY MRS. MEEKE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

London:
PRINTED AT THE MINERVA PRESS,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN & CO. LEADENHALL STREET.
1810.

Das
PQ1981
D84A4
v.2

L.M.
4/24/57

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

MADAME DU DEFFAND.

LETTER I.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

Monday, 2d July, 1742.

I SHALL not feel comfortable till I have heard from you, and I am afraid I shall not do so before Thursday. You have had the finest weather in the world, if there can be any fine weather for those who dislike travelling. To-day, in particular, the sun is almost covered in, and the air is warm, without being heated. If you have performed your journey within the given time, I presume you will reach Forges early this even-

ing, and at ten o'clock I suppose I may bid yo good night. I wrote yesterday to Formont. I am sorry I did not give you Bayle's letters to carry with you; they would have amused you, though I believe you have read them before; but they may be read a second time; therefore, you may desire Formont to bring them with him. I told him all your adventures. I have none of my own to relate, so I shall merely tell you that I supped last night at Meudon, whither I went yesterday with d'Ussé. I had seen the Marechale de Noailles, who did me the favour to look in upon me; she is highly pleased with the recent patent, and very well satisfied with the *little woman,* who requested her to tell her whether she ought to ask Madame d'Antin to be present when she made her first appearance.

The Marechale thought she had better not; but seemed much gratified by such a proof of her confidence. We set out, d'Ussé and me, about six o'clock: I almost fancied I was in the year 1698, and that I was again going to a vintage. During our journey we talked a great deal of you, and did not say near so much harm of you as you do of yourself. There was a very full assembly when we arrived: Madame de Maurepas, Madame de la Valliere, Madame de Brancas, Cereste, the Abbé de Sades, la Boissiere, the Bishop of St. Brieux, the intendant of

Rennes,

Rennes, M. de Menou, &c.; but they did not all stop, as the four last soon left us: the ladies were walking. The Marechal received me tolerably well, but there was no politeness to spare; I think he grows very heavy, in spite of all they say. Forcalquier was very friendly, and entered into every necessary detail respecting the recent occurrence—though he thought himself fully entitled to such a mark of favour, he acknowledged he had been rather uneasy in the first instance, but he was soon convinced that he had nothing to apprehend. Madame de Brancas was essentially concerned in the business; she had been to Versailles, she had seen Madame de Mailly, who knew nothing, (and in fact, she had said nothing either to the Marechal or to Forcalquier, who had previously seen her; indeed, she only learnt the circumstance, from the compliments which she heard handed about while she was at her toilet). Madame de Brancas, however, saw her; and you may suppose that she called all her political talents to her aid upon such an occasion. Madame de Mailly asked her whether they should not often see Madame de Forcalquier at Court? She evaded making any direct reply, with her accustomed dexterity.

" *Madame de Forcalquier was as yet very young,* (this was said in the time of du Chatel.)

 " *She*

"*She was an agreeable companion for the Marechal; she was never so happy as when with her family;*" in short, according to her own account, she never displayed her talents for intrigue to more advantage; and you must suppose that we gave her great credit for her secrecy, when she told us unasked all she knew.

The ladies returned from their walk, and the festival of the hats immediately began; that is to say, Madame de Forcalquier took them from us all, and sent them flying from the terrace to the garden beneath. I addressed Madame de Rochefort, and was not sparing of my reproaches towards her, for not having sent me even a civil word by you—she excused herself better than might have been expected, and soon became very confidential. I told her that d'Ussé began to be jealous of the Abbé de Sades, and I enquired how she came on in Italian? and from her answer, I am inclined to believe that she has not made much progress in her learning, and that *the tutor* has not made the most of his opportunities. The Abbé relieves the Chevalier now and then; if he also wore regimentals, you would hardly know the one from the other, as their language is very much alike. We sat down to cards, Madame de Maurepas, the Abbé de Sades, Forcalquier, and me; Madame de Maurepas and I were not a match for the other two,

of

of course we lost: after which, a melancholy-looking man, whose voice reminded me of the rattle which announces Tenebras, told us that supper was upon table; by which means I discovered he was the house steward; and, in consequence of his summons, we assembled round a table, upon which was set out a supper that might have suited Job during his calamities. We were not, however, the less gay; poor Madame de Brancas fell into a reverie, which we should not have noticed, if she had not heaped a whole bed of sallad upon her plate, to prevent our remarking her silence. The Abbé de Sades asked her, "why she had laid in such a provision?" I observed, "that her melancholy countenance was a convincing proof that she dreaded a famine." She could not find so good an excuse for herself, and yet did not seem obliged to me for having helped her out. Monsieur de Rieux's supper was next mentioned, and declared to have been detestable; he had, in consequence, discharged his cook, who has since been taken into the service of Madame d'Aiguillon. Madame de Rochefort was surprised to hear this, as you had assured her that this ignorant fellow was a much better cook than mine. She was laughed at for saying so, as he has half poisoned all Madame d'Aiguillon's guests; and when he lived

 with

with M. de Livri, he half-starved the whole family. As soon as supper was over, we returned to cards, and then took a walk; d'Ussé, Cereste, and I, sung for the general amusement; and at last made our bows, after I had promised to sup there again this week, and to sleep there on Thursday week, after their return from Versailles.

I hope you will agree that I have spun this supper out to a fine length; I suppose you will do by it as you do when you read novels, skip over three parts of it, to see whether we ever rose from table. Madame de Maurepas goes on Tuesday to Atis; I mean to go to sup there on Wednesday, and to ask her to supper on Friday, and to go to-day to Orlis, and to trust the rest to Providence. Madame de la Valliere was very melancholy, and not much noticed; still it was proper she should be there—her husband is at Choisi. I have asked her for Friday—she seems very partial to me, and I cannot be ungrateful. Monsieur de Richelieu's speech or harangue was very much talked of; the Abbé de Sades repeated a good deal of it by heart.

I shall not talk politics with you, because I have seen nobody who understands them. D'Ussé enjoyed a few moments conversation with Madame de Maurepas, but they were soon interrupted,

interrupted, therefore he learnt nothing; and Cereste, who talked some time with her, asked her no questions.

Nor have I any thing to say respecting the journey into Brittany. The Marechal says—"He never intended to take his *little wife* there, that he merely wished to amuse her, when he gave her reason to hope he should." This declaration has not been attended with the happiest effects, as she is very angry with her husband, to whom she attributes her disappointment; in other respects, the most perfect harmony reigns amongst them. The new mode of cookery does not seem to have succeeded; it has only served to strengthen the former engagements. The Chevalier does not seem to understand any thing of the matter; the Marechal merely exists; the Abbé du Tailly laughs at every thing; and la Boissiere had a wig fairer than the sun. Good day: let me hear from you, and make my compliments to Madame Pequigni.

LETTER II.

The same to the same.

Paris, Tuesday, 3d July, 1742.

You must ere now, except you have been very unfortunate, have reached Forges; nay, I am inclined to hope that you have slept off your fatigue, and that you are no longer apprehensive respecting the consequences of your journey. I hope you will write to me this morning, and that I shall receive your letter on Thursday at latest; after which, if the post sets out from thence every day, I shall always know how you go on. I am really and truly in the greatest affliction: we have heard that Mertrud meant to leave Plombieres on the 23d, on which day Monsieur de Nivernois also talked of setting off—to-day is the 3d, that is to say, the tenth day since his departure from thence, and we have neither seen nor heard of him. All the letters which have been addressed to him at Plombieres, have been returned hither; but the most dreadful part of the story is, that Madame de Livri told Mertrud's brother-in-law yesterday, that she had

had heard from a friend of hers, that a man had been assassinated within five leagues of Plombieres. You may judge what his wife's feelings were, when she learnt this piece of news—I ran immediately to Monsieur de Maurepas, to inquire how we could come at any certainty with respect to this unfortunate business. He was in expectation of Monsieur de Marville, who soon made his appearance, and who had not heard of the circumstance; but he promised to write to Monsieur de Beaupré, to Monsieur de Creil, and to Monsieur de la Galaiserie. Monsieur de Maurepas also advised me to wait upon Monsieur du Fort, because, as Mertrud meant to travel post, he was the most likely to know whether any misfortune had really befallen him. I followed his advice: Monsieur du Fort knew nothing of the matter, but wrote immediately three letters to Chalons, to Nanci, and to Remiremont, and till he hears from thence in return, we must remain in suspense. If he has been murdered, it will be a dreadful business—I can think of nothing else.

The news of to-day did not contribute to enliven me; but when one is in a melancholy mood, we consider every thing on the dark side.

I inclose you the copy of a note, which they pretend to say the King of Prussia has written to Monsieur de Belleisle. If we are to believe what

what is generally reported, this Prince has not mentioned his allies in his treaty; and they go so far as to say, that Lorraine is to be given to the Queen of Hungary, in the place of Silesia, which she is to give up to the King of Prussia; in return for which, he is to pay the English one-and-twenty millions which they lent her. The court, that is to say, the most zealous partizans of M. de Belleisle, have abandoned him. I cannot believe the insolence of Duplessis—: who reports, that he is not surprised at the King of Prussia's having sought an accommodation, because he has learnt that the cardinal was in treaty with the Queen of Hungary. The comptroller is still the same—our friend went yesterday to Choisi, which was the reason why I did not see him, as I went in search of him. They say that M. de Broglie has received full power to take which side he pleases; the only thing he can do is to return; but this may not be a very easy task, as it is supposed that the Austrians are in full march towards Egra; if so, he must fall back upon Saxony. What think you of the king's army endeavouring to conceal itself in the woods of Germany, of forty thousand Frenchmen flying before troops composed of the scum of every nation? There are letters dated the 25th, from M. d'Harcourt; nothing has as yet befallen him—he has received orders to return

to

to Ingolstadt. I shall not write any more to-day, for I am gloomy and heavy. Good day: I am very impatient to hear from you.

I went yesterday to Madame d'Aumont's, and I saw Madame d'Evreux at the window of the anti-chamber, like a solitary turtle upon a bough, which has lost its companion. The little de Valençay, the nephew to M. Amelot, is dead, The Viscount de Rohan is given over,

LETTER

LETTER III.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

Forges, Monday, 2d July, 1742.

I ARRIVED here about half an hour ago, without having met with any accident, nor can I complain of being much fatigued, though I never closed my eyes last night, and we have been very handsomely jolted since eight o'clock this morning, at which hour we left Gisors, till we came within sight of Forges; we have been but fifteen hours upon the road: yesterday we travelled seventeen leagues in nine hours; to-day we came eleven in six hours and a half. The roads are by no means dangerous in this weather, but I can suppose they are impassable in winter. I never broke my fast yesterday, till even o'clock at night; and it was fortunate that I had brought some cold fowls with me, as we could only meet with some musty eggs at Gisors, and a piece of very tough veal. I was very hungry, yet I did not dare to eat much; but notwithstanding I was so soberly inclined, my supper did not digest, and

and in consequence I did not sleep. The misfortune I dreaded has not yet befallen me, therefore my journey went off much better than I had expected. But to enter upon a much more interesting subject—my travelling companion; you cannot conceive how much I dislike her! She is absolutely insane, and has no regular hours for her meals; she breakfasted at Gisors, at eight o'clock this morning, upon cold veal; at Gournay, she eat as much broth stuffed with bread, as would have satisfied half a dozen hungry Limousins; to which she added half a brioche, and three very large biscuits. We arrived here at half past two, and she immediately ordered some stewed rice, and some broiled pigeons: she eats like a monkey, her hands are very like their paws, and she chatters more than the most noisy of that species. She has great pretensions to imagination, and fancies she has a very singular and original way of thinking; but as there is, in fact, no novelty in her ideas, she supplies this want by the extravagance of her expression, which she calls being natural: she wearies me with her caprices, even when telling me that she desires I would regulate her conduct, whereas I begin to fear she will regulate mine, except with regard to my regimen: she is very avaricious, yet no manager; very vain-glorious, extremely conceited, and compleatly disagreeable:

she

she seemed to expect that I should suffer her to eat in my dressing-room, but I told her that I chose to have that entirely to myself, and that I was going to write; I therefore desired her to tell Madame la Roche at what time she chose to breakfast, dine, and sup, and what she chose to eat, and that I expected to be allowed the same liberty; and I have, in consequence, ordered a fowl stewed in rice, to be prepared for me at eight o'clock this evening. Our house is very pretty; my bed-room is large and convenient—and a good bed, and a comfortable arm-chair, are all I require. I have nothing more to say to you to-day. We met near Forges two gentlemen of our acquaintance, who, having found great benefit from the waters, were returning to Paris.

They told me that there was a M. de Sommeri here, and another gentleman, a friend of his, whose name they did not know. This M. de Sommeri is very likely a friend of M. du Deffand's, (I know he has one of that name), and it is not impossible that his anonymous companion may be M. du Deffand in *propria persona;* this would really be very droll; I will let you know whether we are inhabitants of the same town, the next time I write. I am more than ever in want of your friendship, so pray give me a certain proof of it, by writing me very long letters, in which,

I desire

I desire you would enter into the most minute details respecting your health; you need not be so particular respecting your amusements, as we are now at too considerable a distance to admit of my peeping behind the curtain. Besides, I have put my head in a sack, as they do those of hackney coach-horses, and I no longer think but of drinking these waters. Adieu: I shall be a long time without seeing you, which grieves me more than I am inclined to acknowledge even to myself.

LETTER IV.

The same to the same.

Tuesday, 3d July.

Do you know that it is near midnight, and that I am not yet asleep? I have been in bed ever since ten o'clock. I am dying with heat, and do not expect to close my eyes all night; if I am often seized with these waking fits, the best thing I can do will be to hang myself. I spend my days so unpleasantly, that if they are succeeded by sleepless nights, I shall be the most miserable wretch upon the face of God's earth. Possibly my present wakefulness arises from my having been bled, or perhaps from fatigue, since I am literally wearied to death. If you see Silva, do not tell her what I have said respecting Madame de Pequigni's mode of living; she would be angry with me for having made the remark; but to-day she obliged me to remain at table with her during an hour and a quarter, while she piddled and picked out, and finally eat, the very things she had before declared to be downright trash; in short, she is unbearable; but I shall

 never

never complain of her again, as I think it would be very wrong while we continue to sleep under the same roof, and to eat at the same table; though, God knows, I have not much to say in favour of either. If ever I am permitted to leave this place, I think I shall never return here. Two whole months am I doomed to spend here. I think I shall go mad in half the time. I actually suffer myself to die with hunger, that my self-denial may be compleat; if I could but begin to drink the waters, it would help to beguile the time; but no! I must wait, I can't tell you how many days, before I venture.

I have seen to-day all the *decent* people who are now here; *M. du Deffand* was not amongst them: there is a nun from Fontevrault, whose name is Tavannes; a president belonging to the special court of judicature at Abbeville, who wears a scarlet coat, trimmed with gold lace and fringe; nothing can be more magnificent, nor more suitable to the place and to the season; we were assured that he was very fond of high play, and that he would be delighted to join our party, as he had often complained of playing for such trifling sums; and he certainly to-day played at piquet for farthings, and agreed to his wife's playing at sixpenny quadrille; but though she won half a-crown, he does not feel inclined

to suffer her to persevere in her extravagance; therefore, to-morrow we are only to play for a penny. Is not all this very interesting? In my opinion, it is dreadful; and yet during two months, I am to look forward to the enjoyment of this dull daily routine. We hope to have M. and Madame de Rosambeau; I wish they were here. Good night. I shall endeavour to sleep; to-morrow I will finish this scrawl.

Wednesday, Eleven o'clock.

I did not get a wink of sleep, but as I found myself better in other respects, I ventured upon a pint of water, which seems to have done me good, as I feel I shall have a good appetite to my dinner; in the afternoon I shall return my visits, and I hope I shall be able to retire early, and to sleep well, as I should deem it doubly unfortunate to lie awake here. I have not yet heard from Formont, nor can I expect to do so yet; nor dare I hope to hear from you to-day; yet the post comes in and goes out every day, I am told. I dare say you bear my absence very patiently, though I do believe you wish for my return; at all events, I am resolved to think so, since I will not add to my misfortunes, by suffering my imagination to

brood

brood over imaginary evils. You will doubtless, in reply, make me some very fine and some very consoling speeches. Good night—I wish you as much pleasure as I feel ennui.

LETTER V.

The same to the same.

Thursday, 5th July.

First of all, let me tell you that I am much better in health, and that I shall be able to begin to drink the waters on Sunday or Monday; and secondly, that I have received your two letters; they came while I was at dinner. Do not think I shall run them over as I do novels, which are the only works that I begin at the end. Your letters were read as they were written, from the beginning to the end: the one dated Monday, was highly amusing; it rendered me doubly anxious for the arrival of Formont; as I think it increases the pleasure, to have some one present, to whom one can read what we are sure they will relish and understand as well as ourselves. Our Pequigni is not of that race; she would be lost in amaze; she always wants to know who laid it, who hatched it; she is very profound, but not very courteous

Pray continue to tell me all you see, hear, or say; it will really be an act of charity; if you

you find no amusement in so doing, consider it as an act of duty, and then I am sure you will most scrupulously fulfil it. What you have written me respecting poor Mertrud, has really hurt me, and rendered me very uneasy; and I am sure you will think it *your duty* to enter into a few more details respecting him, when you are rather better informed yourself. Your letters must have a degree of connexion; as for mine, they neither ought nor can be written but by fits and starts. I have not the courage to talk to you of our parties, as I am sure my descriptions would put you to sleep; Pallu is the only person who could make you laugh at their folly—I cannot study ordinary foolish people; indeed, the greatest pleasure they afford me, is my being able to forget them, the moment I lose sight of them; yet they are good for something, as they induce me to bear with la Pequigni. I am not so gloomy to-day as I was yesterday; first, because I slept well; and secondly, because I am likely to begin drinking the waters sooner than I had expected, which, in addition to the strict regimen which I observe, will certainly do me good. I have received a letter to-day from Madame de Luynes, with which I was very well satisfied; when you see her, do not tell her that la Pequigni dipleases me; it is dangerous to tell her what one thinks, as it is putting arms in her

hands, which her caprice often induces her to turn against those who have been so silly; therefore, merely tell her that I do not seem to be infatuated by her merit, though I mention her rather favourably, yet you do not suppose we shall ever be upon very intimate terms.

Send me all the news you can pick up, as it will give me a degree of superiority, which I shall not fail to take advantage of, by not rising from my arm-chair, not returning any visits, &c. &c.

Two families of distinction are just arrived here; the head of the one is a Madame de Montigny, whose husband is treasurer to the states of Burgundy; the other is a Mons. and Madame de Ny; they are but this moment arrived; therefore I neither know their titles, nor what (if any) place they hold.

I am not sorry you forgot to give me Bayle's letters, as I have read and re-read them; but I am very sorry I have read Pamela—that would now afford me a real treat. If any thing new should make its appearance, pray send it me immediately; you do not know how much you will oblige me. I am now, to my great grief, fully convinced that I am as susceptible of ennui as I was formerly; I am, however, also fully convinced that the life which I lead at Paris is far more agreeable than I had supposed, and

that

that I should be very unfortunate were I to be banished from thence. You may conclude from this, that you are as necessary to me as my existence, since every day I feel more and more convinced of your merit. I do not mean to flatter you; I am merely displaying my wisdom, since this is a geometrical demonstration.

There is a sentence begun, but immediately broken off, in your first letter, which I should deem very interesting, if I could attach any real meaning to it; but, like all good orators, you are renowned for your periods, of which this is one. Be that as it may, I wish you to divert yourself during my absence; *I insist upon your doing so; you have my free consent,* &c. &c. but write to me often.

There is a great want of delicacy here: indeed, this place greatly resembles the country of Rhadamistus; but it does not inspire people with the same gloomy ideas, as my jealousy will never induce me to take the *gentle* precaution to stab you: this word precaution reminds me that it would be beginning rather late in the day. Adieu!

LETTER VI.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

Wednesday, 4th July.

Mertrud is come to light again, after having signalized himself at Plombieres, and having, like the apostles, cured all those whom he met with upon his road; he has flown upon his arrival to gain fresh laurels, as he positively set off for Versailles in a * *pot de chambre,* within an hour after his return to Paris, whither the comptroller had sent for him. He brought me a letter from M. de Nivernois, who is extremely lavish in praise of his skill. He did not suffer him to drink the waters, like the generality of those there, but having deeply studied the nature of his complaint, he prescribed for him with such effect, and watched over him so incessantly, that, thanks to him, and to the efficacy of the waters thus skilfully administered, he is quite recovered. He entered into a vast many details respecting

* Carriage of that name.

his

his complaint, forgetting that I was neither a physician, nor labouring under the same disorder; but concluded with desiring to be remembered to you. Mertrud's delay upon the road was owing to his having taken the opportunity to visit some relations he has at Langres; it will, however, as matters have turned out, only add to his celebrity, since every province will now re-echo with his name, in consequence of the general alarm which the report of his having been murdered has spread abroad.

There was a report in circulation yesterday, respecting a new arrangement in the treasury department, which had certainly probability for its basis. The comptroller-general is to retain his situation, and Boulogne is to be nominated his deputy; at first, he was spoken of as his successor, but I fancy he will only be his deputy, which ought to satisfy him. You will ask me why I have not seen the D***, and you will have reason to make the inquiry; but I have regularly sought him twice a-day, but have never been able to meet with or to hear of him; but I shall see him this morning. Belleisle seems lost, and the kingdom seems to be much in the same situation.

I shall neither talk of war nor politics with you, because it would weary you and tire me. I shall only tell you, that M. de Belleisle offers

to

to serve as a simple volunteer under M. de Broglie, who has certainly gained all the honour. They say that it is Montmartel who made the arrangement respecting Boulogne, that is, supposing it to have taken place, since, at present, it is merely a report, though, I rather think, not destitute of foundation. I am going this evening to Atis, with Messieurs de Maurepas and Pont de Veyle; probably I may pick up some news there.

But to return to you—if nothing has occurred to prevent you, I presume you began to-day to drink the waters; the weather cannot be more favourable, for if it is as warm where you are as it is here, you must be half stifled. I am very anxious to hear how you manage matters with your present household, as I dare say they will feel anxious to do their best; and as you are not so ill contrived as you think yourself, why I think you will find yourself very comfortable, upon the whole.

Now, to return to Mertrud—I had began to fancy that there was something fatal in his countenance, and I had almost brought myself to believe in metoposcopy.

Voltaire's ode has multiplied *ad infinitum;* every body thinks it absolutely devoid of sense; the finest stanzas, (which are nevertheless very open to censure) in which you may perceive an

attempt

attempt at epigram, are lost for the want of being intelligible. Madame de Mailly thought the letters of Messieurs de Luxemburg and de Boufflers very ridiculous; it therefore appears that she has strangely changed her opinion; but what is that to us? Madame d'Evreux is this moment arrived; all the fools that I know are well, and she amongst the number; she brought a letter from your brother, which I have taken the liberty to open, thinking it would afford me some news, and feeling convinced that it contained nothing which you would not have wished me to have known: I pity him, both on account of his profession and his position, for if what is reported is true, they are very likely to be attacked.

I have very little to say respecting myself, or how I spend my time; the heat is so great, that I never leave home before eight in the evening. I went yesterday to Auteuil. To tell you the truth, I begin to be very susceptible of ennui: you are to me a necessary evil—this would admit of a metaphysical discussion—but that would be less entertaining than even politics. But it is a certain fact, that the idea of being at liberty is much more pleasing to me than the liberty itself; and that when I feel the most happy in your company, the idea that it is not in my power to relinquish your society, even to attend

to

to my duties, is a great drawback upon my satisfaction: my feelings are very well expressed, in the following admirable lines of Corneille, which you so dislike—

> "Et ne pouvant souffrir la honte d'un lien,
> Il voudrait être au moins libre de n'aimer rien."

Good day; endeavour to send me some agreeable news respecting your health, as nothing you can write can give me more satisfaction.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

Friday, 6th July.

I AM delighted to hear that Mertrud is come to life again, and has had such great success. Yesterday I thought as you did, that one might read in his countenance that he would come to an untimely end. I also wrote you a very long letter yesterday, therefore I shall only scribble a few lines to-day. I *admire* the regard you acknowledge to feel for me, because I never had reason to doubt of your sincerity; I can therefore readily believe, that you are never perfectly happy when with me, because you think that you should not have sufficient resolution to give up visiting me, should such a sacrifice be required of you. I own I do not know how to reconcile you to yourself, since your happiness, to admit of your enjoying it, must be supernatural. The best advice I can give you is, to make full use of my absence, to enjoy yourself with your friends, and to treasure up your sorrows,

that

that you may exchange them for simple but real pleasures, when we meet again.

As for me, I am very sorry I cannot see you daily; but I do not give way to despair, because I cannot fancy you greatly regret my absence, or, at all events, you bear it like a philosopher; besides, for your sake, I ought to rejoice that I shall not tyrannize over you, during the next two months.

I have as yet neither heard from nor seen Formont, though I never wanted him more; for the company here is so bad, I sincerely wish there was none. Our household goes on very so so. Madame la Roche starves us to death; no one can be a worse manager. We neither have given, nor mean to give, a glass of water to any body, except some more agreeable people make their appearance here.

Adieu! I desire you would divert yourself, as much and as well as you can—visit all your friends—do not be afraid of contracting habits which my return may derange: the sort of life I mean to lead when I again re-visit Paris, may help to remove the sort of constraint which you now complain of feeling when with me. Besides, I must, in self-defence, declare that I am not naturally tyrannical, and you are one of the last people I should wish to hold in any sort of jeopardy. I am glad that you agree I am not ill-

 contrived,

contrived, since positively I am more complaisant towards Madame de Pequigni, than you would imagine. I may at times have required too much from my friends; but as I know you do not approve of my doing so, I think I have of late had my passions very much under controul. Adieu. Remember you have my free permission to run wild, and I shall never call you to an account for any of your pecadilloes during my absence. Surely you have never been very strictly confined, as I place no faith in bars, bolts, or padlocks; indeed, I am too well convinced that I need none; for as you justly say, you could not relinquish my society, were you so inclined.

When are the Harangues to make their appearance?

LETTER VIII.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

Friday, 6th July.

I MUST acknowledge that I begin to be quite out of all patience; you have been gone six days, you are not more than eight-and-twenty leagues off, and yet I have not heard a word from you since your departure. Positively I begin to be very uneasy, and if I do not hear from you to-day, I shall fancy something supernatural must have occurred, to have prevented you from writing. Possibly the posts, as you are not in the direct road, are not very regular, since, were you ill, you would either have written a line yourself, or Mademoiselle d'Evreux would have been so obliging; or else Madame de Pequigni would have done me the favour to have let me know how you were. Impatient people seldom reason well, and seldom foresee every thing; but I suppose the post does not leave Forges every day—that you did not arrive there till very late on Monday—that you did not

not write till very late on Tuesday, which was probably post-day, by which means your letter did not set off before Thursday; therefore perhaps it may reach Paris to day.

I did not write to you yesterday, because I returned very late from Atis, whither I went on Wednesday, with M. de Maurepas and Pont de Veyle. We had but just got there, when one of the most violent storms I ever witnessed came on; what made it more grievous was, its being accompanied by a deluge of hailstones, full as large as musquet balls; you might have swam in the lower rooms; we were all obliged to seek a retreat above stairs. This is the third storm of this description this year, which has occasioned the most shocking devastation in the environs of Paris; vineyards, corn fields, cherry orchards, &c. &c. all have suffered, and we did not need these minor evils.

M. de Belleisle remains with the army; and there are people who think he is more in favour than ever, and that his apology has criminated some very *tall oaks*. We are at a loss to guess what is going forward; every thing seems suspicious—there seems no stability, and even the *cedars* tremble. When I say that M. de Belleisle remains with the army, I do not mean to insinuate that M. de Broglie is recalled; indeed, it should appear that no other notice has been

 taken

taken of their quarrels, than to desire they would endeavour to live peaceably together.

Mertrud has seen the comptroller-general; he was shut up with him *tête-à tête* during an hour and a half; and the result has been, that Mertrud has undertaken to prescribe for him, though he could not persuade him to admit Silva to the consultation; he merely made his report to Helvetius, who has approved of all he did and said: Mertrud is, therefore, in high favour, and I expect we shall soon see him a farmer-general. He gave me an account of the situation of his patient, whom he does not think in any danger; indeed, he seems convinced that he shall be able to cure him.

While I was walking last night, about eight o'clock, in the Palais Royal, with M. d'Argenson, my footman came and told me that Madame de Luynes had seen my carriage in the front court, and that she desired to see me; I followed him into the garden, where I was met by her and M. de Luynes, and Madame de Chevreuse; I asked her by what chance she was in Paris, and since when—she had been here since Tuesday evening, having come to meet M. de Luynes, on his return from Choisi. You may suppose that I declared myself very much hurt, at not having been informed of her arrival; she excused herself as well as she could—she was to have gone

on

on the Wednesday to St. Maur; the storm had prevented her, &c. &c. Madame de Chevreuse had just received a letter from her husband, in which he told her that the Austrians were in sight of them; therefore, we shall either hear of a battle, or of a retreat. No one knows what the King of Poland means to do, though it does not appear that he means as yet to abandon us. They say he has twenty thousand men on their march, to which he offers to add fifteen thousand more, (that we are to pay) upon condition, that when these five-and-thirty thousand men shall have joined M. de Broglie, he is to march immediately against the Austrians, to decide this very long quarrel. Yet all the public papers display the greatest contempt for our arms; and it is a fact, that the English have just burnt five Spanish galleys, in one of our ports in Provence. Their design is to insult us in every way, till they induce us to declare war against them, because, in that case, the Dutch (with whom they have formed a defensive league) must afford them every assistance. As a proof of the truth of my assertion, they have taken a French vessel, on board of which was three hundred soldiers, who were going to relieve the regiment of Auxerrois, which is at Monaco, and they have refused to give them up.

Madame de Luynes drew me on one side yes-

terday, to tell me that she had not the courage to ask leave of absence for your brother; she had therefore written to you, to request you would let her know whether you continued anxious for his return. I assured her that you were, since, as your brother was unable to move, it was necessary that he should recover the use of his limbs to enable him to do his duty.

M. de Luynes told me that they were preparing to go to Dampierre. I begged he would let me know when he went. M. d'Argenson, who had joined us, was also invited: these great folks then hurried away, to pay their respects to M. de Bayeux, who was just come from Versailles, covered with the laurels he has obtained at Toulouse.

It thunders most dreadfully, which really rather deranges my ideas. Mademoiselle de Toulbes is better, and Silva begins to hope she shall not die. I have not yet heard whether the Viscount de Rohan is dead. Prince Casimir entertained a very large party on Wednesday, in honour of his mistress's coronation. Madame de Mailly has fitted up her apartment at Choisi, in the most elegant style. Meuse is confined at Versailles with the gout. What do you think the elder d'Argenson has done? he has had a citation delivered to *her Royal Highness* from his son, respecting the succession of the Queen of

Spain.

Spain. *Her Royal Highness* is, as you may suppose, furious against him; if she would follow my advice, she would have him turned out, in return for such an insult. Adieu! I fancy I am committing a very great sin in writing to you, as the thunder increases.

I will tell you another time about Meudon. Madame de Chevreuse cannot help thinking that M. de Pequigni's journey is rather extraordinary. "What shall she say—she knows—that is fact—that in her opinion—."

LETTER IX.

The same to the same.

Saturday, 7th July.

This is truly extraordinary—I did not receive your letter from Forges of the second, till yesterday afternoon. I cannot conceive what can have occasioned its delay; possibly the post merely sets out from thence three times in the week, on the Monday, the Wednesday, and the Saturday; therefore, as you did not write till Monday afternoon, your letter did not set off before Wednesday, which makes me fear I shall not hear from you again before to-morrow, if then; this is by no means an agreeable perspective.

You desire me to make some extracts from your letter for Madame de Flamarens. I thought it much easier to read it yesterday to Cereste, who supped with me, and who is to see her today; but as you wrote to her on Tuesday, perhaps she received her letter as soon as I did mine.

At last you are quietly settled at Forges. I am

am very happy to hear your journey went off so well: you did very right not to sleep at Pontoise. I am very glad your house pleases you, and that you have a good bed and a snug arm-chair; to which, if you do but add a bolt, you will neither have to dread being broken in upon by strangers, nor by your lord and master; a *tête-à-tête* with him might really be attended with serious consequences where you are, as the waters of Forges *are very renowned in many cases.*

I saw Madame de Mirepoix yesterday; she came into the box where I was, with the Chevalier de Brancas. She asked whether it was not too late to think of going to Forges? I observed to her, that she put the cart before the horse. Her husband is not yet gone, and she now flatters herself that he will not go at all. All the Maurepas, present and to come, (as I do not believe any of them will ever *re-appear,*) supped with me last night, as did the Pierrots, d'Aumont, Pont de Veyle, &c.: d'Argenson also came, and he was very caustic for the want of appetite. In other respects, the evening went off very well. Though the sturgeon was spoiled, and the supper far from good, the weather was delightful; but the ladies, who are all Hamadryads, did not dare venture to walk in the garden, though it never presented a more tempting appearance. I must acknowledge, that I would

very readily have exchanged them all for you alone. They were all up to the neck in politics, though nothing was said that has not been said a hundred times before; and this is what is called the high world. Cereste laughed very heartily, at what you said respecting M. du Deffand. I am very anxious to know whether he is the unknown, but I dare not flatter myself that you will be *so fortunate;* if he should, surely you will no longer exclaim against novellists and dramatic writers, for bringing their characters or actors rather strangely together. But, joking apart, should it be him, what would you do with him? I think he would accommodate himself to circumstances, and perhaps compose a third *fugue.* But yours is really rather a strange destiny, to have a husband and a lover, who are continually hovering round you, notwithstanding your repeated endeavours to leave them both in the lurch. Have not you some presentiment respecting him, as you often have respecting me? I remind you of merry Momus, the fabulist; he, of some opera of la Coste's, or of some tragedy of Pellegrin's.

The little Forcalquier has been very unfortunate; all her preparations were made for her appearing to-day, for the first time, at Versailles; when, as if out of pure spite, old d'Antin has chosen to set out for the next world, and she cannot,

cannot, in consequence, be presented these three months. I have been told that Forcalquier complains of her being too partial to Italian, which has squeezed rather too much acid into their matrimonial *tête-à-tête.*

You have then at last met with your master, with respect to being natural—or rather, a counterfeit edition of yourself has made its appearance. This ought not to give you a moment's uneasiness; you have only to do like the dancing-master of Mademoiselle de Tourbes, that is, do your best, and I think you may defy her worst. But seriously, I should only laugh at her follies and her caprices, if she would but suffer me to be guided by mine; as you often, from *greatness of soul,* thus style your *wise plans —thoughts and actions.*

I inclose you two letters, one from your brother, the other from Madame de St. Pierre; I have not broken the seal of either.

I am sorry that fatigue merely heats your blood, instead of inducing you to sleep; but I think the waters will have their due effect, which, added to early hours, a strict regimen, and a little more exercise, will quite re-establish your health.

I was told yesterday that the comptroller-general had had a very bad night, and I was finely laughed at for having been so uneasy respecting

Mertrud,

Mertrud, and having set so many people on to revenge his supposed death; not to mention my having pressed him into the service of the comptroller, whom I have resolved shall be cured, in spite of himself.

I presume you will let me know when and whether my letters come to hand, as I dread the irregularity of the post; this is the fifth I have written since your departure: let me intreat you would not suffer them to lay about.

You enquire after my health; it is tolerably good, but I eat too much; every morning I make a vow not to eat so much at night, which I as regularly break every evening. Yesterday, after my company were gone, I walked for an hour alone in my garden.

Good day. I embrace you very tenderly, and desire you will take great care of yourself.

I do not mention the war to you, because I am as ignorant in that respect as you are. D'Ussé's lawsuit began yesterday—I cannot so easily foresee when or how it will end.

Did I tell you that the Marechale de Villars inquired after you when I supped there? She returns on Wednesday, and means to remain here till the end of August.

Olivier, who was a downright crop during the severest part of the winter, has again taken to wearing flowing wigs, to the great astonishment of

of Cereste, who found him the other day sweating under the weight of one of the most enormous that fashion countenances. I have now told you all the news I know. My two covered walks are finished; they make a very good appearance, and are much more in proportion to my garden than the others were.

LETTER

LETTER X.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault,

8th July.

I WENT to the fountain this morning at eight o'clock, and I actually shivered with cold; but as there are two rooms in which there are constant fires, I was not a very great sufferer. The company is below mediocrity; a Madame d'Orleans is the only person to whom I wished to speak a second time, and that merely because she labours under a complaint very similar to mine There is also a Countess de Tienne here, but she is invisible, as she neither pays nor receives visits, nor never goes to the fountain; and yet she is the only person with whom I wish to form an acquaintance; her complaint is also a swelling, or a schirrus; therefore I should not mind humbling myself to obtain an interview. We are to have a large party to-day; we found we must give these people a dinner, if we did not wish to become their aversion; we mean to give one more, and we shall then have had all the

the inhabitants of Forges, who have any pretence to gentility; and having thus done the handsome thing by them, we shall very politely tell them, that as we neither keep regular hours, nor do not always eat together, we can neither pay dinner visits, nor receive company at home at that hour. When Madame de Rosambeau comes, we shall see how we like her, and whether we need put ourselves out of our way for her. La Pequigni and I are now very good friends; she is obliged to conform to as strict a regimen as I am; and, as in other respects I do not expect any thing from her, I am never disappointed.

What say you to the letters from Meudon? I felt more offended by them than perhaps I ought to have done, and I immediately wrote the answer which I inclosed to you yesterday, as I did not wish to give way to my burst of indignation; therefore, I have put my cause into your hands, since you must acknowledge that the joke has been carried too far. Is that the way to write to a friend, respecting whom one might be supposed to be uneasy, or, at all events, to feel rather interested in their recovery? And then how very unfeeling, to turn into ridicule a woman with whom I am obliged to live! If they had each separately written me the same things, I should not have been so much hurt; but to join

to

to write me such a letter, was abominable, as each has contributed her epigram, to render it more provoking. Yet I think my answer was too vehement—therefore, I dare say you did not send it; but I am resolved, nevertheless, that they shall know I am very much displeased with them.

Sunday, Seven o'clock at night.

I was interrupted by the arrival of our guests; there were six of them: shall I tell you who they were? The President and Madame de Bancour, the Chevalier de Sommeri, M. le Roy, Mademoiselle Desmazy, and Madame de Tavannes. We gave them a very good dinner, after which we played at quadrille; we then took an airing in our carriages in the forest, at the imminent risk of our lives, therefore I shall never do so again; I then walked to the Capuchins with Madame de Tavannes, and Madame de Bancour, the only two of the party to whom I could speak with any degree of pleasure.

Madame de Pequigni takes an airing on horseback every day with Mademoiselle Desmazy, who bears some resemblance to one of the Swiss Guards of sixty. Madame de Bancour is about thirty, by no means plain, very gentle, and very polite: it is not her fault if she is not more amus-

 ing,

ing, since it arises from her never before having mixed with the world, as she is by no means deficient in good sense, has no pretensions, and is very natural; her tone of voice is peculiarly interesting; she is very simple, perhaps, in that respect, rather too much in the style of Jeliot; if she had been more accustomed to society, she would be much more amiable. She has explained to me her general mode of living, and I find that she fulfils all her duties without austerity and without ostentation; therefore, if she did not weary me, she would really please me.

Madame de Tavannes is no fool; she has more the manners of a woman of fashion; and you can perceive that her education has not been neglected. She has entered into a long and not tiresome detail, respecting her grief for the death of her abbess, and her dread of Madame de Montmorin, and in short, respecting every occurrence at Fontevrault; but we have almost exhausted the subject.

As for our men, they are hideous, particularly the President de Bancour, who has a plurality of cousins at Paris, who are Countesses or Marchionesses; and who is besides very intimate with M. de Rambures, upon whose credit he seems to build the greatest hopes: he can enter into the most minute particulars respecting every circumstance that happens to be mentioned; M.

de

de Gaumont, the counsellor of state, has entrusted him with the most important secrets; and he takes you by the sleeve, to whisper in your ear, that he will tell you what a droll answer he once received from a cobbler, to whom he said—"What trade do you follow?"—"I am a *minor* shoemaker, Sir." This story he repeats in every company. I presume you have now formed a very high opinion of his talents; he means to cultivate acquaintance with me and Madame de Peqnigni, when he again visits Paris; though I know I have greatly fallen in his esteem, owing to my having had the imprudence to acknowledge to him that I did not keep a carriage; but as he rather wishes to remain friends with me, he seems inclined to believe that I am more actuated by caprice in not doing so, than by necessity.

Monday, 9th, half past twelve at noon.

I HAVE just received two letters from you, those of Friday and Saturday; I ought to have received the former yesterday; but I now know what occasioned the delay, and shall be able to guard against it in future; but I am as much as ever at a loss to account for the delay of mine. They are sent every day to Neufchatel, from whence the post sets out every day for Paris. During the

the two or three first days after our arrival here, this was not, perhaps, strictly attended to; but even then you ought to have received three or four of mine at once. Be that as it may, write to me every day; I will do the same to you: I shall receive your letters very regularly; and as you will have no reason to be uneasy respecting my health, you need not care about the dates of mine. I will write again this evening, and I will not close my letter before morning. I shall conclude this, that it may arrive in time for the post at Neufchatel. I have been to the fountain; I fancy I am the better for the waters, which will, I am assured, entirely remove my complaint. I received a few lines on Friday from Formont, who promises to join me here next week: I am very impatient for his arrival. What do you mean by M. de Pequigni's journey? is he coming here? Pray enter into a rather clearer explanation respecting him—his wife has not as yet heard a word from him.

LETTER XI.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

8th July.

I had resolved not to write to you, I am so angry with the post. I did not receive a line from you yesterday, but the letter I have this moment received, dated Tuesday and Wednesday, has induced me to alter my mind. I am certain the post does not leave Neufchatel every day. It is very provoking to receive a letter dated four days back, when it might and ought to have come to hand the next day. This is my sixth. Do not mention what I have said respecting the present situation of affairs to any soul. We are all quite in the dark, because I verily believe we are all panic-struck, and afraid to make inquiries. The comptroller is much worse; there must be some alteration. Boulogne has returned among the puppets, but no one is nominated in his stead. Our friend almost fainted at my house the day before yesterday; he had drank too much beer. We went together yesterday to Auteuil;

Auteuil; he was rather weak, because he had taken some of Val's waters in the morning. I returned from thence in time to sup with the President Chauvelin. Paris is very large, and the manners of the fifteenth century do not differ more from those of the eighteenth, than those of one quarter here from those of another. Normant was mentioned, and some of the company maintained that he was a very pleasant companion; others declared that he was by no means so agreeable at table as in his study; and that many people who boasted of having supped with him, or of having been invited to do so, never had, nor never would have that advantage. This is in return for your Abbeville president. You will guess that all this was said to hear my opinion of the man, but, like the Petronius of the age, I merely smiled expressively; but did not choose to speak my real sentiments of him, as I could not praise him, and knew that my censure would prove his death-blow. Meanwhile I go to bed earlier than usual.

Do not be uneasy because you do not sleep; people do not change their bed and their room with impunity; but after a time you will rest better than ever; and depend upon it, your *ennui* will not be lost upon me, since it renders me more grateful for the care you take of yourself. I am sorry *you* had not the pleasure of enjoying

M. du Deffand's company, for at least four-and-twenty hours, as *he* would have afforded you a charming subject for your letters.

But, in my opinion, it will be rendering our correspondence very uninteresting, if we answer each other's letters article by article, since one seldom recollects what one has written, the most essential parts excepted.

Well, this is truly surprising, though I am very much obliged to you; a letter from you has this moment fallen either out of the clouds, or down my chimney; as I am no worshipper of the sun, I am more inclined to fancy myself indebted to the chimney-sweepers. Be that as it may, I am in possession of a letter, the third since your departure! But what provokes me, you tell me that you wrote to me on Thursday and Friday, and neither of these letters are yet come to hand, and it will be the same in future, I fear. Besides, these letters, if they should ever find their way to Paris, will not tell me any thing new respecting your health; but after all, they will be kindly welcome, because—they are from you.

I wrote you that there was to be a grand entertainment on Wednesday, given by Prince Casimir, in honour of his sovereign. I shall have all those I met at Atys to supper on that day. I have received a note from Forcalquier, requesting

questing to see me at Meudon; I mean to go there to-morrow, and to remain till Wednesday.

I send you the panegyric upon the Cardinal de Polignac, which Mairan sent me; it may, perhaps, cost you a hundred pence for postage. What diverts me in the style of these gentlemen, for I comprehend M. de Maupertius, is to perceive that they endeavour, from time to time, to imitate Fontenelle; but it is with an ass's hoof. The present work seems to be that of a man very little accustomed to write, and who has consequently no style of his own; yet, from time to time, one may perceive that he is a man who thinks and reflects. As for the Discourses of the Academy, I do not know what is become of them; besides, you did not desire me to send them you.

In looking yesterday among my waste papers, I found a collection of poems of M. de Nevers; the following four lines are not deficient in point of moral—

"Tout homme audacieux qui prend un si grand vol,
Quoique son bonheur le soutienne,
Qu'il songe à lui, qu'il se souvienne
Que la fête de Vaux se chôme à Pignerol."

There are two other singular lines in the same poem, respecting a tax which had just been imposed upon corn:

"Sur l'intacte Cérès tenter des monopoles,
C'est au coin de la mort fabriquer des pistoles."

You do not tell me whether you have received any letters from this part of the world.

I have been much amused by the account of a journey to Limoges, written in the form of letters, by M. de St. Aulaire, in 1663, that is to say, seventy-nine years ago; these letters are addressed to a Mademoiselle de la Force.

During the journey of Madame du Maine to Versailles, the *shepherd* remained at Seaux, from whence he wrote a very jealous letter to the cardinal, who assured him in reply, with his usual gallantry, that he was by no means his dupe, since his affected uneasiness was a convincing proof that he was the favourite of the day.

Have not you heard it related that Madame de Brancas taught the little Maubec, and the little Fronsac, to write love-letters, to act the rivals, and to appoint rendezvous? this was beginning at the other end.

Adieu; I am sorry you are so much a prey to *ennui;* though I think it bears some resemblance to the story of the thunder, which induced a lady who was very sparing of her kisses, to bestow one upon her astonished husband. I am just in the same situation; you fancy you regret me, but the fact is, you feel obliged to relate all your troubles to me, because you are well as-

sured

sured that no one else is so sincerely interested in your concerns.

I inclose a letter from D***; if it is as frigid and as stiff as the one he wrote me some time back, you had better not read it at the fountain; that family are not celebrated for their epistolary talents.

Monday, 9th.

Madame d'Evreux, who is but just arrived, is furious against Louison. I rather softened her rage, by telling her how you were. She inquired whether you had began to drink the waters. I entered into every necessary detail, not forgetting the good bed and the arm-chair. She was surprised to hear Madame de Pequigni was still your inmate. She had not her napkin in her hand to-day, but she was adorned in a beautiful silk gown, a silver grey.

There is no news, so good day. I embrace you with all my soul.

LETTER XII.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

9th July.

I HAVE got rid of my company, and I am going to write to you, as much and as long as it pleases God to let me. The weather is too bad to allow of my walking; my right foot is besides so swelled, that it renders even my leg painful, and prevents me from having the perfect use of it. When you meet Silva, ask him what this proceeds from, as I know it does not arise from my drinking the waters, since I have been subject to it before. I went this morning to the fountain, as I wrote you, and seated myself in a room where there was a good fire, where I drank six glasses of this famous specific, which certainly did me good; though at first, I think it rather flew to my head, as I felt myself unusually gay, and then rather drowsy. I dined very heartily about two; I eat some stewed rice, the thigh of a boiled capon, picked a bone of veal, and the leg of a rabbit, with a *quantum sufficit* of bread;

I then

I then played at *la comète* with Madame de Pequigni; after which I sat down to quadrille, with my friend Madame de Beaucour, M. de Sommery, and M. d'Erlevry; these are my favourites; but they are gone, and here I am. Your letters afford me the greatest amusement, as I may say of you as Madame d'Autré does of Cereste, "*that you are a delightful absentee.*" Yet you send me nothing. I made myself sure of the Speeches of the Academy; possibly they are not yet published. But I must request you would send me all the new pamphlets which come out, since, believe me, no alteration has taken place in my way of thinking; therefore, at Forges as at Paris, and, in short, every where else, you are my only resource, and the only person upon whom I depend, and I might have added, and *from whom I exact any thing;* but I know the word *exact* does not sound well in your ears.

La Pequigni is a dead weight upon my hands; her mind may be compared to space *ad infinitum,* since there is extent, depth, and perhaps every other requisite dimension, which I am at a loss for terms to define; but it is, in other respects, a mere blank. She has seen, pronounced judgment, and tried every thing, chosen every thing, and rejected every thing; she is very difficult, if she may be believed, in her choice of company; and yet she spends the whole day amongst the most frivolous

frivolous women here, to whom she prates like a magpie. This by no means displeases me, since I find it, on the contrary, very convenient, even now; and it will be much more so when Formont arrives. Our dinner puts my patience the most to the trial; you would suppose she was decidedly insane while eating; she mangles, as I cannot call it carving, a fowl, in the dish in which it is served, then removes the best part of it upon her plate, this she covers with broth, and finally, sends away more than half; she cannot bear to have a joint of veal turned in the dish to separate a bone, for fear it should soften the skin, but having haggled one off, she gnaws a little off it, then calls for the fowl again; after this, she peals off all the brown of the veal, and then returns with fresh spirits to the fowl; and thus she goes on for two hours; during which time, she has accumulated upon her plate a pile of bones, and other orts, while I am dying with *ennui*, except, by way of passing the time, I eat more than does me good. It is really curious to see her eat a biscuit—it is the work of half an hour—and, to sum up the whole, she devours like a wolf; to be sure, she takes a wonderful deal of exercise. I am sorry that, in common with her, you find it next to impossible to remain quiet during one minute. But as I am upon the subject, I cannot help telling you, that no

one

one can be less amiable; she certainly does not want for either wit or understanding, but she turns neither to any advantage; therefore, I do not think she will ever improve upon acquaintance. In other respects, one may manage to live with her without quarrelling; indeed, I never afford her an opportunity, since I submit to all her fancies, so long as she never interferes with mine; but we shall never be upon such intimate terms in future. If writing to you did not afford me a very pleasant occupation, I should die of *ennui;* but as I thus employ myself during the best part of the day, time does not hang so very heavy on my hands, though I am glad to retire early; indeed, I feel surprised if I am not in bed by half past ten.

I do not answer your letters article by article, because with respect to news, it is out of date when you receive mine; and with respect to what is said or done in society, it is forgotten in a week, and you will not receive any answer to your last letter, which was dated Saturday the 7th, before Wednesday the 11th at soonest. The letter which I finished this morning, and which left here at three o'clock, will not set out for Paris before to-morrow at the same hour; as for yours, I always receive them on the second day; therefore, at all events, we shall have the pleasure of hearing from each other every day.

day. Your letters will have novelty to recommend them, while mine will be almost out of date before they reach you. My brother writes me, that by the advice of all his friends, he is going to Strasburgh. Henceforth, pray open all my letters; I wish you to see what every body writes me, as there may be subjects touched upon, respecting which I may require your advice.

I have not yet heard from Madame de Flamarens; but I received a letter to-day from Madame de Rochefort, with which I was much pleased. It was her brother who wrote me those fine effusions of absurdity which I sent you, which I am much more tempted to excuse in him, than had the Abbé de Sades taken the same liberty. I very much disapprove of the conduct of the *Kitten*, and I am very glad I am not sufficiently near, to induce her to put me into her confidence. My regard for her will never degenerate into foolish indulgence, therefore I am glad I shall not be obliged to tell her my present thoughts.

I would lay any wager that le d'Ar*** has never inquired after me, since no man cares less about what does not immediately concern him. You are not at all like him in that respect, which I think rather a merit in you; but that may be owing to circumstances; at all events, when one

is

is at Forges, one is tempted even to deem it a virtue. Therefore, do not endeavour to correct yourself; not that I may reap any benefit from this, your turn of mind, but it is very certain that it can do me no harm.

Here is my Pequigni returned: adieu, till to-morrow, or perhaps only for a few hours.

LETTER XIII.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

9th July.

I HAVE already written to you this morning; but as I am going to Meudon, where I shall remain till Wednesday, I will, before I set out, answer the two letters which I have just received from you, dated Thursday and Friday. My imagination depends very much upon your's; though, when I have nothing to answer, my ideas are all-sufficient; but there are circumstances which derange my thoughts, and then I no longer know what to say: —such is exactly my present situation.

Your Thursday's letter pleased me very much, because in that you seem very much pleased with me; and if I had only had that to answer, I think my letter would have been very gay; but your Friday's epistle is written in so different a style, that I am going to re-read the first, to recover my breath.

You tell me, that you do not read my epistles as you do novels. I never really supposed you did;

 I presumed

I presumed you were more prudent; therefore I am astonished that you should desire me to continue to write to you as an act of duty, as I do not think my style has, as yet, been sufficiently constrained, as to lead you to suppose I was merely actuated by that motive. Indeed, I might with truth tell you, that I spend my mornings more to my taste than my evenings, because I am engaged in writing to you during the former. Indeed, you ought to see me again in my letters, as you did during our younger days, since nothing clouds my imagination; therefore, I ought to appear in a very favourable light; and surely my letters are neither weak nor meagre. I must be able to flatter your caprices, as well as Gobert. But to change the subject, I must tell you who I have just seen—Mertrud, who is this minute arrived from Versailles. Figure to yourself, in the first place, that he now goes backward and forward in one of the comptroller's carriages, which is wholly at his orders; he sups and sleeps every night at Versailles, and comes to Paris every morning, always in the said carriage. He stutters more than ever, never recollects any name, and is, in short, more rustic than your prospects are at Forges; nevertheless, he will cure the comptroller, who is already able to leave his bed, and to play a game at cards; he eats and sleeps well, that is to say, six hours of a night,

a night, and he did not sleep at all some time back. His complaint lies upon the nerves, and Mertrud is convinced he can remove it. La Péronnie stands amazed; Helvetius deems it miraculous; the Court is enraged; the Cardinal is very glad, as he begins to like him again as much as ever, though he had, like Mademoiselle d'Antier, intended to transfer his regard to his successor. The ministers, who had considered Mertrud as a mere quack, are astonished. The King can neither think nor talk of anything else. There was no truth in the report, that even a man had been assassinated. M. Dufort, who has made many inquiries respecting the supposed murder, has informed the comptroller where Mertrud dined, where he supped, and where he slept, every day and night after he left Plombieres; to all which Mertrud, like the little Mufti, says, "It is all very true."

The comptroller has promised to provide for him very handsomely; but the most diverting part of the whole is, to hear him relate what passes in the invalid's room. The only person of whom he seems to have any knowledge or recollection, is M. de Marville; he pronounces his name very boldly; and he declares, that he is continually speaking in his praise, and always drinks to his health; for be it known, while with us, he always eat with our upper servants; but now he

dines

dines and sups, and is "hail fellow well met" with Madame Fulvie. This makes him say, that the comptroller is very much of a gentleman, and a very handsome man. Madame Fulvie is too pale; "but then there is *that other*—ha, why—*that other*—who they say is her brother." —"You mean M. de Fulvie?"—"To be sure I do; but what a fool he is! And then there is M. Fagon?"—"Do you mean the physician's son?"—"The very same. What a bag of bones he is! but he is very much my friend, so I do not care for his looks. He tells me all France is in my debt. And Madame Fulvie did so laugh when she heard that I had been assassinated, because, you know, if I had been murdered, why, I could not have been there; and if I had not been there, why, I could not have cured the comptroller, that is very certain, you know."—"Agreed. Who else was in the room?"—"Who! why, I can hardly tell, there is such a succession of them. There is often a man who has something to do with the wild beasts."—"What! M. d'Ecquevilli?" —"D'Ecquevilli! no; this is—a—why, one of those who belong to the wolves."—"Ah! M. de Flamarens?"—"The same. He is a very handsome man; he is never tired of asking me questions; and it is him who told me he would speak to the Cardinal for me. But, my dear Sir, what a ridiculous man often comes there! an

 Abbé

Abbé de Bro—d'Imbro—bless me—he who has a brother in the army."—" The Abbé de Broglie, I should suppose?"—"The very man. He attacked me upon anatomy: why, he is as ignorant as a waggon-horse; all he said upon the subject was absurd to a degree. He was well laughed at; I positively blushed for him. I dissected a woman the other day, at Versailles. They were all there; but they would have been finely puzzled to have done as much, while I did the business in the twinkling of an eye. The King heard of it, and laughed very heartily."

You have now had the *marrow* of Mertrud's discourse, which I have considerably abridged. But I positively begin to think he will cure the comptroller; and this will be a very desirable circumstance, situated as we now are. They had recourse to him, it seems, because he has cured one of the King of Spain's bakers, whom he wishes to make us believe was also the King's secretary (I do not know how the poor man contrived to blend two such opposite trades); but he had the same complaint M. Buron has laboured under, who mentioned the circumstance to the comptroller, who, in consequence, sent for Mertrud; therefore, my recommendation of him came a day after the fair.

I am very glad to hear that you have the courage to exist, even at a distance from me.

To tell you the truth, I never supposed you would cry your eyes out about me; nay, I do think, that were you very agreeably situated, in very good company, and where there was a very good table, you would not often even think of me. But where you now are, you may as well laugh at the silly things I write, as at the silly things which M. and Madame le Roy say, or even those of Madame de Montigny.

I was at the opera again yesterday, and I was very highly entertained. La Maure and Jeliot were divine; and neither Dupré nor Javillier ever danced better: the whole went off extremely well. To-morrow week, we are to have Chassé in Issé again.

As for political news, there is none. It is supposed that Prince Charles has caused some of the troops who were in Moravia to surround Prague, that he may cut off our supplies.

As for Madame de Pequigni, you must take the will for the deed; as you are certain that her intentions are good, give her due credit for them. Under a very rough bark, she conceals a very good heart. The Abbé de Fontaines is wonderfully pleased with Pamela; but he smiles very expressively at Maupertius's preface. There are some "Adventures in the Wood of Boulogne," which I will send you. Pont de Veyle says they

 greatly

greatly resemble "The illustrious Frenchwoman." As you do not read *me* as you do novels, I shall not tell you that I send you twenty kisses. I endeavour, as you desire me, to divert myself, as well as I can; but, unfortunately, I seldom succeed: therefore, were I sincere, I should acknowledge that I am very impatient for your return, since no one can ever reimplace you in my esteem, as my opinion never changes respecting my friends: therefore I by no means resemble a weathercock, as I always maintain my ground, no matter from whence the wind blows. Those I once love, I always love; and I love you after this fashion: therefore, had I gone to Forges, I should neither have asked Madame Martel, nor little O———, nor any others, to have joined me there; but even my good qualities make as much against me as my faults. I am well aware that I am often very much to blame; yet I cannot bear to be reproached wrongfully—in a word, therefore, I should like you better, were you to write me that you know I love you, that I am incapable of loving any other woman, and that my letters are so many proofs of my real regard for you. How do you like this specimen? If it pleases you, adopt this style, and put me once more in good humour with myself; in addition to which, enter into many details respecting yourself;

yourself; but I would have you beware, as I can believe, as easily as you can make me feel, that I am and ever shall be your's.

LETTER XIV.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

11th July.

Once more I am at your service, and most heartily glad I am to be so. I have very politely dismissed my company, with the assistance of my little friend Madame de Bancour, who took all the men away with her, telling them I was going to write letters. She is really a very pleasant little woman, and would, upon the whole, suit me much better than my companion, who was seized to-day with an unusual itch for talking. She is now riding in the forest, with a Mademoiselle Desmazy, who might very easily be taken for a man in disguise—indeed, I have my doubts respecting her sex.

When you want to send me any large packets, only send them to La du Chatelet, and she will forward them to me gratis I received a letter from her to-day, in which she inclosed the case of M. de Joyeuse. She tells me, that Monsieur de Richelieu has delayed the printing of his discourse;

course; but as soon as it appears, she will send it me. I have had a second letter from Madame de Rochefort to-day, and one from the Abbé de Sades, of six or seven pages, which I have not yet read. I feel very much fatigued to-day; I have dined as heartily as you do in general, and this has not absolutely agreed with me: the waters certainly do me good; but we have had dreadful weather these two last days. I go to the fountain nevertheless, though I have quite given up dress, since I seldom leave my chimney-corner. It is tolerably fine at present. I begin to be rather sick of Madame de Tavannes; she dined with us yesterday, and again to-day, which has surfeited me with her company. Do you know who is here?—Lauzillieres. Perhaps you may not recollect who he is:—He was once the friend of Madame de Prye, and who, saving your presence, had the honour———He is as old as the world; his head shakes. He came with a Madame Harens, who is either his wife or his mistress. A chaise and four has this moment entered the town, which la France tells me has brought Madame de Rosambeau. I pity you for being obliged to read my letters; but it is in vain for me to attempt to render them either interesting or amusing, as I merely breathe here; I can hardly be said to exist: and it is very fortunate, that

situated as I now am, I am so stupidly disposed, I will read the Abbé de Sades' letter; perhaps it will afford me a subject for this, which I may then conclude better than I have begun.

I have finished it: it is very well written. He tells me, that it was resolved to enter into a sort of double correspondence with me, respecting what was passing at Forges and at Meudon; that Forcalquier was appointed to undertake the first, and that he undertook the second. He has certainly acquitted himself very well; he has drawn the portraits of Mesdames de la Valliere, de Forcalquier, and de Rochefort, with the hand of a master. Nothing seems to have escaped him. He has perfectly delineated the virtues and the foibles of each, and has done them great justice; but I have nothing to say in reply. I can merely request, that they will not require anything of me while I remain here, since I am grown quite dull and heavy. Indeed, I see nothing worth describing, nor hear nothing worth repeating; and I can think of nothing myself. This torpid state of mind may be very good for the health; but it is rather oppressive to those with whom we correspond: and I think it will induce you to bear very patiently the irregularity of the post. Adieu. I am going to write to Madame de Luynes. I shall inclose my letter

in

in your packet. You will be so kind as to send it her.

I thank you for the panegyric upon the Cardinal de Polignac. I shall wait for Formont, to read it, as it is not at all in the style of la Pequigni. Send me all the new pamphlets, and inquire at Prault whether there are any new books. I have resolved not to go out again, while I stay here, and merely to see company of an afternoon, since I shall be glad to be alone; and I have resolved to make these arrangements previous to Formont's arrival. You have no conception how I am plagued with visits. The other day, five ladies fell from the moon, I was tempted to believe, into my room, whose names were announced to me in so awkward a manner, I did not dare address them by them, for fear of mistake. I embraced them all, and accompanied them, with all due ceremony, to the door of my anti-chamber; and I have since learnt, that one of them is the wife of an attorney of Amiens, and another was the wife of the famous pastry-cook there, who makes such exquisite duck pies. This did not give me a moment's concern; but what has vexed me is, that I have since learnt she has a scorbutic complaint in her face, and I, fool like, suffered my cheeks to touch her's.

I am by no means glad Madame de Rosambeau

is

is come, as she may oblige me to return her visit; and the only real enjoyment I have here is to be as lazy as I please. Adieu, till I can think of something to say to you.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

12th July.

I WENT yesterday to see *Brutus*; the house was very full; and I am more and more confirmed in my opinion, that it is the finest tragedy Voltaire has ever written. Lanoue acted with that sort of intelligence that you dislike, as you think it makes him appear deficient in point of spirit. This is like saying, that a young woman plays delightfully upon the harpsichord, which means that she is very far from handsome. However, I thought he played with great spirit; he is never deficient in that respect; but he wants strength. Upon the whole, I was very well satisfied with him. La Gaussin was as great as usual; but I was delighted with Sarrasin, who gave to the part of Brutus all the dignity, all the feeling, and all the tragic, that could have been required. From the theatre, I returned home, to receive my company. The party was not numerous, as we were but seven—la Marechale, her son and daughter,

daughter, Madame de Maurepas, Cereste, Pont de Veyle, and me. The supper was excellent, and, what is still more surprising, we were very gay. But I must acknowledge, that when they were gone, had I known where to find you, I should have gone in search of you. The weather was delightful; the moon was at the full; and my garden seemed to inquire for you. But, as says Polyeucte, "*what signifies talking upon such subjects, to hearts which God has not softened?*" But I regretted you the more, as I could in imagination inspire you with feelings, which I shall never be able to do when we are together.

No one can now talk of anything, but a letter which it is said Voltaire has written to the King of Prussia, of so imprudent a nature, that one can hardly suppose he has been so mad. He tells him, "that he has done wisely to conclude a peace, since half Paris approves of it, as he merely anticipated the Cardinal; that he need no longer busy himself, except in recalling the pleasures, the children of the arts, to his capital —that is to say, the opera, the dramatic muse, &c."

But, upon the whole, this letter is not so well written as Voltaire generally writes; but the ideas and the moral are very like his. Pont de Veyle, who saw him at the play, says he appeared much surprised when he told him what was in circulation;

tion; and he swore, that he had never heard of it before; he certainly had written a letter in answer to one from the King of Prussia; but that no one had seen it, not even Madame du Chatelet; and that there was nothing in the one he had written which bore any resemblance to what was in the one imputed to him, and in circulation. It has, however, become rather a serious business, as all the foreign ministers have received copies of it; and Monsieur de Chambrier found one at his door, which the Cardinal has read. If it is a mere roguish trick, as there is every appearance, you must agree that it is very malicious. There are people who are particularly unfortunate in this respect, and who could even meet with enemies at la Trappe. He is very much at a loss what course to pursue; and it would be rather difficult to advise him how to act. Upon reflection, it strikes me that the best thing he could do, would be to write again to the King of Prussia, to request that he would shew his former letter to Monsieur de Vallori, and let him send this second letter to Monsieur Amelot, for him to forward it to the King. But for this step to prove of any avail, he must not have written the letter which is imputed to him; and the letter that he acknowledges to have written must not contain anything likely to give offence here: and for that I would not become answerable.

Madame

Madame de Rochefort meant to have returned to Paris yesterday, because her fever has not entirely left her, and that Silva wished her to do so; but she has altered her mind, I presume, as, upon returning home, I heard that the Marechal de Brancas had called, to say he should expect me to follow him, and to sleep at Meudon, where I propose remaining till Sunday, when I shall return, to sup at la Marechale's, with the same party I entertained yesterday.

You will be surprised to hear, that we have no more news than if we were in a time of profound peace: this is a very strange country; I do not think the end of the world would be thought a novelty at the end of three days.

Madame d'Evreux has just left me. She brought me M. Mairan's speech, which he has sent you under cover to me. I opened the packet before her; and I shall not send it you, as you have it already.

Madame du Chatelet was at the play yesterday, with Madame de Luxemburg. We must not be angry with her for coming in late, in general, since she missed the whole of the first act yesterday. Monsieur de Maurepas did not sup with me, notwithstanding I had asked him. I presume he supped somewhere else: I think I might say with Armida,

"La

"La glorie est une rivale,
Qui doit toujours m'alarmer;"

since his seems a sort of opera glory; but then I am by no means jealous.

The Countess d'Estrées is dying; but they think the Viscount de Rohan, though he has been blooded twenty times, will recover. Mademoiselle de Tourbes was to begin upon a milk diet to-day. This is all my news. I did not receive a letter from you yesterday.

LETTER XVI.

The same to the same.

13th July.

I INCLOSE you Silva's letter of advice and annexed prescription, which I desire you would take care of, as I suppose you burn my letters; though they may be as worthy of being treasured as many of those of Bayle's were, since half of those could very well have been spared; as, in fact, they might as well, when they were about it, have published his washerwoman's bills.

I saw du Chatel yesterday. I do not know how the Harangues or Speeches might read; but his opinion respecting them by no means coincides with mine. He does not think the first deficient in point of wit, but very much so in point of eloquence; nor does he think the style sufficiently academical; (you must understand that he alludes to that of M. de Richelieu, as he thinks as I do respecting the other, that it is below mediocrity). But with respect to the first, I still maintain the same opinion; since what he calls eloquence, neither ought nor can be employed, except

except *a person* can expatiate more at length upon any subject.

I went in the afternoon to see Madame du Chatel, when they were again mentioned. She is quite of her husband's opinion; I told them I was by no means of their way of thinking: they agreed to all the beauties which I pointed out to them, but strongly condemn what he says respecting language, which they affirm is not a new idea: now I think it is, and very well expressed. This convinces me that it is a misfortune to have to print any thing; and I should now be very sorry to be obliged to publish what I have written upon Fontenelle, which you have seen.

What you have told me respecting your company, has not had so good an effect upon my feelings, as the waters have had upon your health, as it bears very heavy upon my mind, if not upon my stomach; indeed, I find your account very hard of digestion. I fancied myself in the lowest parts of the Marais, the rue d'Anjou, rue St. Claude, &c. Your M. de Bancour is truly hideous. Like you, I should have no wish to see any body but Madame de Tienne, for Madame de Bancour and Madame de Tavannes, would be to me like crying at a comedy.

As for M. de Pequigni, I have heard no more of him; had I known or heard any thing respect-

ing him, I should of course have let you have known; but of nothing comes nothing. M. de Belleisle has entered into a negociation with M. de Koniglec, which is likely to succeed; he is again at the helm, and it is supposed that a truce has been agreed upon: what renders this the more likely is, that the army of Maillebois is returned into France: probably this was required, as a preliminary step towards the other arrangements. It is however true, that M. de Belleisle's credit is higher than ever, since he has been proved *in the furnace,* and has, like gold, been purified by the fire.

However curious the relation might be, I cannot, respecting this article, enter into any details in a letter; but you may rest assured that all bow down to this *comète,* and that he would readily give the *nine of diamonds for nine;* and that no one, positively speaking, no one is acquainted with his real situation; at all events, only those who are treated like Ibrahim, are likely to finish their career, and that without taking any part in the consultations.

This will certainly astonish you, but it is very true; and then, after this, as Courcollet used to say, send your children upon their travels; be very wise, very prudent, and let your conduct be irreproachable; take your measures with judgment, love the state, &c.

All the world now say the comptroller cannot recover; yet I can hardly believe Mertrud has been so grossly mistaken; but I rather think people are inclined to speak as they wish; and if he does not soon depart this life, he will be considered as a dead weight, as the scene must soon change, and of course the actors. But you know what the present state of affairs is; in other times, some alteration would long since have taken place; but the impressions are now so incrusted, that there is not a file of sufficient strength to deface them.

This is all I have to say upon this subject; so to proceed to things of more importance—Chassé is to appear on Tuesday in Issé; he is to resume his old situation, and le Page and him have only endeavoured to outvie each other in point of civility. Pont de Veyle is sure that in two months, le Page will be recalled.

Du Chatel is, like me, delighted with Brutus; he pronounces it to be the best tragedy that Voltaire has written.

His pretended letter to the King of Prussia still makes a noise. According to what you told me, you will see Formont this evening; I am really very glad upon your account, as his conversation will render the waters more efficacious than heretofore; pray remind him of me.

 I cannot

I cannot approve of not receiving your letters till the fourth day after they have been written; you may say that it is of no consequence, but I maintain it is, since mine are much less interesting, owing to this circumstance, as you have almost forgotten those articles upon which you required an answer, before they come to hand. But I know of no remedy. Silva highly approves of your present regimen, and desires you will continue it.

I am really going this evening to Meudon, from whence I shall not return before Sunday, when I sup at la Marechale's; this, and with whom, I have already told you. The King sets off to-morrow, and returns on Thursday; he has nothing to do here, since all the business is done in another part of the world.

Madame de Bouville, the dowager, has died very suddenly. I asked Silva how Mademoiselle de Tourbes went on; she is better, but not absolutely out of danger.

I do not know whether I shall be able to write to you from Meudon: I will do my best to oblige you, as I can suppose news of any kind is very acceptable where you are. I forgot to tell you, that the du Chatels and I talked a great deal about you yesterday; and I cannot give you a better idea of what they said, than by telling

you

you it fully met my approbation. D'Ussé's law-suit goes on; it is supposed it will be judged on Monday.

I saw our friend yesterday; he looked as black as ink. The hail has made the most dreadful havoc in these environs; half the isle of France is laid waste; and there has been a great deal of damage done in Burgundy. Peace! peace! else we are all ruined.

Madame de Crozat is worse. Pont de Veyle entertains Mesdames de Luxembourg, Boufflers, and de Mirepoix, to-morrow evening; du Chatel is to meet them. Prince Casimir's fête was superb; M. de Nevers ordered the dinner, but there was barely enough; d'Argenson eat as much as any other four, and certainly not as if he had, as was the fact, been dying four days ago.

LETTER XVII.

The same to the same.

14th July.

I do not think I shall write you a long letter, though I am inclined to fancy that I have many things to tell you; but I forgot to bring my writing-box, and Forcalquier has provided me with such pale ink, and such wretched pens, that I have my doubts whether you will be able to decypher my scrawl.

I arrived here about six o'clock yesterday, and found Cereste and M. de Maupertius. The Chevalier is gone to visit his regiment at Corbeil, from whence he returns this evening; Madame de Rochefort, Madame de Forcalquier, Madame de Melesse, and Cereste, were taking the air in an open carriage. I went to meet them; Cereste alighted, and we walked together for some time; after which, I took his place in the carriage, as Madame de Melesse chose to walk home with him; I was therefore left with the two little women, who immediately began to talk of the *certain* letter which they had written you, solely

solely with a view of amusing you; and having no news to tell you, they had thought fit to rally you, and to joke with you. They repeated some parts of this *unfortunate* epistle, and then told me, that from your answer, they found you had strangely mistaken their meaning, as you seemed half inclined to quarrel with them. I listened in silence to all they had to say, though my smiles gave them to understand that I was no stranger to the business; which induced Madame de Rochefort to exclaim, "He has heard the whole story before!" I agreed that I had heard of the circumstance. "Well, and do you think we were to blame?"—"I think Madame du Deffand had great reason to feel herself offended." They appeared very much surprised to hear me say so; and I thus resumed—"I think you know enough of Madame du Deffand, to be well convinced that no one can bear raillery, nor take a joke, better than she does, particularly from you ladies, to whom she is so sincerely attached; but she at first supposed the Abbé de Sades had had a hand in this said letter, and she felt extremely provoked at your having suffered a man, with whom she is merely acquainted, to familiarize himself thus with her; not to mention the dread she entertained, of his feeling inclined to entertain all his friends at her expence, in

consequence of having been, as she suspected, a party concerned in your jokes; and she would not have wished to have had all she told you respecting Madame Pequigni made the public talk, and of course repeated to Madame de Luynes, who would have been the first to declare that she never spared any body. She was, therefore, and with justice, very angry in the first instance; but, as soon as she learnt from Madame de Rochefort, that she and her brother were the only people who had either written or seen this said letter, she merely felt inclined to laugh at the contents, as a proof of which I produced your last Tuesday's letter, which perfectly satisfied them; they added, that the Abbé de Sades had since written you a charming letter—and thus the subject dropped.

The Marechal was gone to see the Grimberghens; he returned home very soon after we did: he had seen Voltaire's letter, which seems to have made his gall overflow. I said that I did not absolutely believe he had written it, as he positively denied it; but I found he was resolved to maintain that he was the author of it; and I must acknowledge, that upon reading it a second time, I felt half inclined to be of the same opinion. But then, is not it astonishing that it should have got into circulation? he must

have

have had the folly to read it to some one, who has chosen to make it public. Let me have your opinion of it, as Cereste has sent it you.

The little woman is decidedly in the family way; of course, she no longer wishes to go into Brittany, though she is more self-willed than ever. Her present situation affords her an admirable pretence for tyrannizing over every body; if Forcalquier had not left the army, she would bid fair to out-herod Madame la Marechale. The Marechal means to return to Paris about the 20th of August, to prepare himself to hold the states; and while he goes into Brittany, the two little women will remain there. Madame de Rochefort is much better; I even think she grows handsomer. We supped very gaily, and were very good company afterwards; I did not fall asleep, and we did not separate before midnight. As I sleep in a room adjoining the saloon, Madame de Rochefort kept me up till near two o'clock. Our conversation was very general; we talked over her own affairs, mentioned the terrors of d'Ussé, and reasoned respecting their origin. I was very moral and very severe; and she agreed that she had, in many respects, been much to blame; indeed, I always thought her very candid and very sincere. I talked to her respecting this business, as Ruiter would have talked of any adventure that had occurred upon the

the Seine, with a reference to his past naval engagements; and this may truly be deemed a fresh-water tale, and a very insipid one. I next talked of *their* acknowledged wish, to become a proficient in foreign languages; she entered into the most satisfactory details on the subject. The *tom-cat* had been as inquisitive as myself, I found; he is certainly a cunning mouser. However, this study was had recourse to to banish *ennui;* and *they* amuse themselves at the expence of the master, who is the avowed knight of your *kitten.*

But to return to your letter of yesterday—it is dated five o'clock, Monday, 9th of July, and one o'clock at noon, on Tuesday. I have read it again, that I may reason with you respecting its contents, since I think it necessary to convince you that I have paid some attention to what you say; every one has a different way of considering the same things, or rather, some people really feel, while others only laugh at their sensibility.

I must suppose you are merely laughing at me, when you say—" What! cannot you afford me half an hour a-day?" I am very glad to find that neither the repetitions, nor the length of my letters, tire you; neither the Abbé de Sades nor me, can require any thing more. Yet had you read my letters with attention, you would not

not have overlooked what I told you in one of them, that my evenings were changed into mornings, because I devoted them to you; but you are seldom inclined to give me good words; and I dare say you had no intention to flatter me, when you told me that I was the only person in whom you placed any dependance. Now from you, this is very gratifying, as you never disguise your feelings; therefore, I believe you like me as much as you ever did or ever will like any body.

I should have been very angry with myself, had I waited till I had stumbled upon Silva by chance, to consult with him respecting the swelling of your right foot, though I have heard you complain of it before; but that is another reason to have it, if possible, removed. If M. Paris was still in being, he would make your left foot swell, by way of a preservative.

I am very glad to hear the waters agree with you so well; they seem to be exactly suited to your constitution: if ever you are mistress of a garden, you must place in it a statue of the nymph of Forges, whom we will crown with flowers.

I think you never made use of a happier expression, than when you told me that "I am a delicious absentee;" though it is not always right

right to speak the truth. But I am of opinion, that if you were permitted to regulate your own mode of life and mine, you would often banish me from your presence. Absence may be compared to the Elysian fields, since it renders all men equals, or rather gainers by it; as they can then make songs upon their mistresses, write sentimental letters, and sigh to the winds and waves.

I do not know when I expressed my dislike of the word *exact;* there cannot be a more flattering term, when it proceeds from a confidence in the regard of another; but sometimes you seem to have the greatest confidence in mine, and sometimes you are ready to declare that you have none, just as it suits your convenience: now I never vary in my opinion of you.

The picture you have drawn of la P— is inimitable; I never read any thing more laughable, more novel, nor more like the original; I shall read it to the *cats.*

You do not tell me that you feel any pleasure in writing to me, but that if you could not thus employ your time, it would hang heavier than it does upon your hands; which reminds me of Cailus, who has taken to engraving, that he may not hang himself. Yet I am ready to acknowledge, that I ought to be very much flat-

tered

tered to find you think me very capable of appreciating all you write; indeed, I am always happy to turn every thing you say to my advantage.

When I began, I did not intend to write more than a page; I know you will say I went on, because I had nothing better to do; be it so, I agree, since I cannot be better employed. Did not I tell you, that you would soon get accustomed to early hours? You do not tell me how you sleep, which I take to be a good sign.

Madame de Flamarens talked, about a week ago, of coming to Meudon; nay, she had even gone so far as to fix the day. Cereste kindly reminded her that the time drew near. She reflected that she could not leave Paris so soon, and I dare say she will put off her visit till there will be nobody here to receive her.

You are mistaken; le d'Arg—— has mentioned you. I told him, the day before yesterday, that I meant to go the next day to Meudon, which reminded him of you, I suppose, as he desired I would tell you that he hoped you were better. "She is at Forges," said I.—"Indeed! then tell her so when you write to her." You think I have a little touch of St. Vitus's (*alias* the Pequigni) dance, and I think you are rather troubled with the torpidity of D——, to whom you

also

also compare me; or rather, you tell me I do not resemble him, as I concern myself with what does not concern me; now I thought that I had a right to interest myself in whatever concerned you. Upon my word, you are always inclined to cavil with me—I am always either too officious, or too indifferent. Now, why not candidly acknowledge, that though I have done my best, during ten whole years, to make you feel something like regard for me, I have not as yet been able to succeed? That would be speaking the real truth. Instead of that, you still affect to doubt my love for you. I agree, that I am rather flattered by these said doubts, since they prove that you do not absolutely hate me. But positively, I never concern myself but about those I love; therefore I bear no resemblance to Madame du Maine.

I really and truly greatly miss your society; and I have certainly not endeavoured to forget you in a continued round of dissipation. But I might as well not endeavour to exculpate myself, as it affords you no small pleasure to find fault with me, and I am always anxious to contribute to your *comforts*. But I have no patience with you respecting Madame la Roche; remember what a state you were in, when you first took her into your service. You will be fully

fully conscious of her worth, should you give her warning, or induce her to do the same by you; so pray do not run the risk of parting with her.

In my last, I sent you Silva's answer to your questions; but I mean to hold another consultation with him ere long.

I do not care how homely you are, if you do but continue attached to me; indeed, I laughed at your fears upon this score. I agree this is not affording you much consolation, to tell you that I do not care whether you are ugly or handsome; but the fact is, that I dare say you will look better than ever, when you return to Paris, as Silva assures me that the waters of Forges are supposed to clear the skin, and, of course, improve the complexion; if I had not been fortified by his authority, I should not have touched upon this subject, since you have long known my opinion of your face and mind.

Adieu—I have now finished your letter and my own. I am sometimes seized with a fit of speaking the truth, as well as other folks, and I never can conclude ceremoniously when writing to you.

The troops of the King of Poland are to join ours, merely, in my opinion, that both countries

countries may obtain better terms. I know of no other news, and no one knows how the negociation goes on.

The treaty the King of Prussia has entered into has been published; we are not even mentioned in it.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

13th July.

Do you know, I begin to fear that my letters weary you? I cannot tell from whence it proceeds, but I feel that I grow very suspicious. I think it is the natural consequence of my ennui, since I really do not think I have any reason to distrust you; indeed, your letters ought to have prevented me from falling into this error, since they please me beyond measure, and are all I have to keep up my spirits here. I do not know what you will say to the one I wrote you yesterday; I was not in a bad humour, nor angry with you, but I was in that sort of temper which often induces me to speak my mind, at every risk; since it is certain that I love you very sincerely, *merely for yourself*—you know what I mean. I endeavour to call my reason to my assistance, when I grow mistrustful; but I do not always succeed; and, at all events, it is a proof that I dread having a rival near the throne. I

 did

did not go to the fountain this morning, the weather was so bad; it has been so during the last five days; therefore, I felt more fatigue than benefit from going thither; and fatigue of any sort never did, nor never will agree with me: till the weather clears up, I shall drink the waters at home; indeed, I think they have a better effect when I do so; you may attribute this fancy to my laziness—I remained all day *en dishabille.* This evening I had Madame Hareng and Lausilieres; one may converse with them, therefore they will, from time to time, help to fill up a vacant hour.

We began to read the panegyric upon the Cardinal de Polignac, but I felt so little interested in it, that I requested it might be laid on one side; I am not as yet strong enough to bear such serious reading. When Formont comes, I will make a second attempt; so pray send all the tales, romances, and pamphlets, that you can pick up. I have already read the Journey to Falaise, and the False Countess of Isemberq; both are excellent at Forges. I am afraid the Revolutions of Persia will be too sublime for this place. I am very sorry I have read Pamela: I now perceive that I have neither wit nor understanding of my own, but merely a happy knack of stealing from those of others; and as I cannot do so here, I can merely, at present,

boast

boast of my instinct: this is no great misfortune, situated as I now am. La Pequigni has a continual overflow of words, but she is as barren as ever with respect to ideas. I merely endeavour to remain upon very good terms with her, that we may part civilly, but not in friendship; for our intimacy is at an end when we separate, since she is the exact reverse of me in every respect: she grows as fat as a pig, therefore her countenance has less expression than ever.

I am very uneasy respecting Madame de Rochefort; I should be seriously afflicted were she to be really ill; let me know how she goes on, and pray look in upon her as often as you can. Forcalquier has never written to me, since I took pet at his clever jokes; they were, however, less impertinent, as coming from him, than if they had come from the Abbé de Sades.

Saturday, 14th.

I HAVE just received your book and your Thursday's letter; you are going to sleep at Meudon, and you do not think you shall be able to write to me. Your letters are my daily bread, and I cannot do without them. I had not a very good night, so I have again taken the waters at home, and I shall continue to do so, while the weather continues so bad, and I feel myself so weak.

 I think

I think I grow thinner, while every body round me grows fat. I shall be very glad to receive Silva's answer to my questions, as I do not know in what proportions to take my cassia; and, as I do not sup, at what time I ought to take it.

It seems that I may place your wishes for my return to the full of the moon, or to the beauty of your garden, or to your being alone. I am regretted or looked for according to the humour you are in, or to the fineness of the weather. Now I wish for you at all times and in every place, since to me you must be always welcome, as I am of an *easy temper, and by no means romantic.*

LETTER XIX.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

15th Jy.

I AM just returned home, where I found your two letters, the first dated one o'clock Wednesday, the second at five o'clock the same day, to which you added a few lines on Thursday. I like your lamenting the ennui your letters must occasion me, and your apologizing, because you cannot render them more interesting. Do you think that I require you to write me news, to render them so? or would it be news, were you to tell me that you have the greatest regard for me, that you know I am no less attached to you, that you are all impatience to see me, that you greatly regret not seeing my garden in all its beauty? at all events, you might write all this in a desert, as well as at Paris. This I can assure you, that my thoughts continually wander to Forges, while surrounded by the most brilliant society I can meet with here; and if I do not expatiate more upon my feelings when I write,

it is, because I do not think it would be right, to merely study my own gratification, as I wish to promote yours; so I shall take up my journal from Friday, and bring it down to the present moment.

I arrived at Meudon at six o'clock on Friday evening, and I wrote to you on Saturday by Maupertius, who offered to convey my letter to Paris; it probably set out for Forges this morning. Saturday was a holiday, or rather I had no time to write. The *cats* were, as I wrote you, very uneasy respecting their *joking* letter to you; I comforted them, after having fully convinced them that they had greatly erred; and as a proof of my confidence and yours in their friendship, I read them your inimitable portrait of la Pequigni. They were delighted; they will overwhelm you with letters; the kitten adores you, and so does her brother. Yesterday, Saturday, we had dreadful weather: the beautiful Ruffec arrived about eight o'clock in the evening, but hers was merely a passing visit, as she was going on to Versailles, from whence she proposed going the next day to St. Leger; Monsieur and Madame de Mirepoix, came in afterwards, and staid supper. (I do not know what I am saying, Madame de Ruffec came on Friday.) Yesterday then, Monsieur and Madame de Mirepoix came to supper; we sat down to quadrille, Mirepoix,

 the

the Marechal, the Abbé de Sades, and me: the Abbé had come from Versailles in the morning, to dine with his sister-in-law, who is come from Cologne.

The Mirepoixs were very well received: we supped, and I fell asleep afterwards; a quire of smoking papers were held under my nose, and even that hardly woke me. Mirepoix seemed very much inclined to be very great friends with me, and as I do not dislike him, I did not repel his advances. He wore a diamond star, a present of his wife's, instead of embroidery, but I did not much admire it; he is, however, very fond of his wife, and that I did admire.

During supper, the *kitten* received your letter of Wednesday; I was, therefore, indulged in another *tête-à-tête,* after every body had retired, and she gave me your letter to read: she laughed very much at the face I made, when I came to that part where you say, "that age begins to deaden your feelings." I let fall my spectacles, while I exclaimed, "If she talks of age already, what must she think of me?" We again went over pretty near the same ground we had gone over the night before; this might have tired you, but I am a very complaisant listener—I should have made an excellent confessor. This morning we were joined by Monsieur and Madame de Preval, M. de la Riviere, Monsieur and Madame

Rieux, &c.; they all staid dinner. M. de Rieux displayed as many snuff-boxes as there were dishes, during the different courses; I never saw such a collection; and he absolutely dazzled me with his diamonds; ruffles excepted, every other part of his dress was covered with them. I presume he is undergoing the punishment of Midas, and that every thing he touches becomes a precious stone. He played at quinze, for the first time, with Madame de Forcalquier, who won fourteen Louis of him. After dinner, Madame de Rochefort and I had another snug dish of discourse.

There is great talk of private theatricals for next winter; M. de Mirepoix is to be enlisted into the Thespian corps; they say they shall begin with the Misanthrope, which is Mirepoix's *chef d'œuvre;* they are then to act du Chatel's Zaide. Madame de Mirepoix is to take the place of Madame Rochefort, Mirepoix that of Forcalquier, du Chatel is to keep his. Think how pleased Madame de Luxembourg will be, as they will do without any of you; though Madame de Mirepoix told Madame de Rochefort, they should be glad of her assistance. They next talked of *La Petite Maison,* and of pressing you all into the service to act in that: if you should not choose to come into their plans, Madame de Mirepoix is to take your part, and Madame de Forcalquier

is to do Javotte. Madame de Luxembourg seems to be excluded from the corps, by general consent. Forcalquier has, at last, finished his play, but I cannot remember the title of it; there are two friends, who are in love with the same lady; upon the whole, the subject is not badly treated, and he is anxious to have it acted; but he must first get Madame de Mirepoix in the mind: these are mere winter projects, well understood. While we were at dinner, they brought us the King of Prussia's answer to Voltaire, which was, of course, written in Paris, by some of his *kind friends*. Forcalquier will send it you; but as for the letter, which I now really believe was written by him, it is more talked of than ever. Madame de Mailly frets and fumes most fearfully, and declares he deserves a most exemplary punishment. I do not know how the matter will end—I fear in his making a hasty retreat to Bruxelles. Poor du Chatelet ought to have inserted in the leases of all the houses she takes, that she will fulfil every part of the agreement, admitting Voltaire does not play the fool during the term. Upon my honour, it is hardly credible that he can have been so inconsiderate. He is, however, more in favour than ever with the lovers of the drama, and Brutus draws together a crowded audience every night.

I must tell you, between ourselves, that the Marechal

Marechal de Brancas, though he is a very good sort of man, is tiresome to a degree. During the whole time I spent at Meudon, they say he was in wonderful good humour; but he hardly ever opened his mouth.

In my way home, I called upon les Grinberghens. Heavens! what a delightful house! they were overjoyed to see me; but they seemed very melancholy, indeed; they are very much to be pitied.

The treaties are all broken off again, they say: at all events, we have received no news from the army, during the last three weeks. All now depends upon the good faith of the Generals. M. d'Harcourt must be puzzled to guess whether they wish him to remain with the troops, to advance, or to retreat: he has asked for another General—no one has been sent—in short, things go on worse than ever.

As soon as I reached Paris, I drove to the Marechale's, who gave me a very polite reception. Her son was with her, and our party consisted of Madame d'Aumont, Madame de Maurepas, and Madame de Mirepoix; the men were Mirepoix, Cereste, Pont de Veyle, le Vauxjours, the little Salins, and me.

The comptroller is much worse; Madame de M—— drew me on one side, to tell me that our

our friend must try to go to Issi to-morrow, but that he must first call upon her, as he would then learn what M. de M. has heard from thence: I fancy they understand one another. I mentioned what she said to Cereste, who is quite of my opinion, and I have in consequence just written to our friend. Mirepoix asked me to sup with them to-morrow; I accepted the invitation: he also asked Vauxjours and his wife. Three o'clock is now striking; good night, till to-morrow morning. But I must not forget to tell you that I met Madame de Flamarens at the Marechale's. I read her your description of La P——, which made her shout with laughter. I asked her whether I could not pay my respects to her at her own house, were it merely at the *grate*, for I think her hotel greatly resembles a convent; but she cannot receive me. She is deep in your debt, with respect to letters, she told me, but she means to clear it off very speedily.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

14th July.

I AM terribly afraid I shall not have a letter from you to-morrow; this will be very vexatious. I am so accustomed to receive them immediately after I have drank the waters, that the disappointment may prove of serious consequence.

What you write me respecting the supposed letter of Voltaire, has quite alarmed me; somebody must have played him this malicious trick: I suspect the Abbé Desfontaines. I am fearful he will not be able to avail himself of your advice, as it might not tend to his justification, were the King of Prussia to shew the real letter to M. de Vallory, since, though I do not believe Voltaire to be a bad patriot, there may be more flattery in this said epistle than would please our court. I am really anxious to know how the business will end.

Madame de Luynes writes me that she goes to Chaumont on the 23d, for a fortnight; I presume

sume you will be invited, and I dare say you will go; in which case, I shall be left at full leisure to indulge my ennui. I am sometimes astonished at the fatality which brought me hither, which is like thinking of my death; if I did not endeavour to dissipate these gloomy ideas, I should certainly fall a martyr to them. You have no idea how melancholy this place is; yet you may, for I recollect you have been at Plombieres; but it is not the place that I dislike so much—it is the company. Fortunately, I am of late grown so exceedingly stupid, that I am unable to argue upon any point; I merely exist. Were I in very good health, I might be able to keep up my spirits; but when both body and mind suffer, it is really dreadful.

I dare say those Boulogne Adventures will just suit me; I shall not begin them yet, as I am reading Crementine Queen of Sanga, written by Madame de Gomes, and dedicated to *Monseigneur* de Maurepas.

Do you know, I shall not be at all surprised should Mertrud cure the comptroller; our success always depends upon our planet. Do not recommend him to d'Ar——; he would certainly kill him. But I think he might procure *Monseigneur de M*—— an heir. But your planet may have nothing to do with that business; therefore, he must not attempt to work miracles.

Do

Do you think I shall ever see you again? Do you think I shall ever again re-visit the Rue de Beaune? Shall I ever sup with you again? All my fear is, that I shall die here: how melancholy to be buried at the Capuchins, and to be p—d upon by all the inhabitants of Amiens, of Abbeville, of Orleans, &c.

I hope to see Formont to-morrow; but the pleasure I expect to derive from his company is rather damped, by the dread I entertain that he will participate in my ennui. However, as he comes here upon a very charitable errand, he must not hope to obtain any reward here below, and I have prepared him not to expect more than he will find: he thinks he owes me this visit, therefore it becomes an act of duty, and he will do more for that, than for the love of any one. But I can hardly fancy the waters are of any service to me, while I am such a martyr to the tedium of the local, though I really bear my misfortunes very patiently; but I am never happy, and were I to think, I should go mad. I am delighted when the clock strikes ten, since I then retire to bed: if it was not for that, and my armchair, I should be a hundred times more miserable than I am; but I do enjoy comforts. Do you pity me? However, this I vow and declare, that cured or not cured, I will never again visit Forges. You perceive I am writing for mere

writing

writing sake, and that I have learnt to gossip of my dear companion, who, by the way, is just come in, and to whom I am going to lend my ears. She will entertain me with all the clever remarks she has doubtless made, upon all those she has met; nor will our servants have escaped her notice; positively she tires me more than any body else. Adieu till to-morrow.

Sunday, one o'clock.

Formont is just arrived. I will write to you by-and-bye, as dinner is upon table. Voltaire's letter, which I have now read, strikes me as having been written by him.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

I was dead asleep last night when I left the Marechale's; the Vauxjours set me down. Madame de Mirepoix was more flattered and courted than she was ever before; and her husband came in for his share of the sugar-plumbs; the Marechale hardly noticed any one else. I woke during my journey home. Vauxjours has not left his house, and he has some hopes of arranging every thing to his satisfaction; I wish he may. Your *kitten* loves you more than ever. But now to answer your letters. I have forgotten your description of Madame de Bancour; yet it is necessary to know something about people, to feel interested in their concerns. I have your letters by me, but I cannot at present go in search of them. You have your doubts respecting the sex of Mademoiselle Desmazy; therefore, I really think you ought to point out to la P—— the risk she may run, by riding *tête-à-tête* with her in any forest. Forcalquier, I fancy, rather wishes to lower the Abbé de Sades in my esteem, as he told

told me that he had been a week in writing the letter you received from him; I think it was paying you a very high compliment; and as he succeeded in the end, his trouble was not thrown away.

The return of your appetite, is a proof that the waters agree with you. I shall never be sparing of my trouble to procure you what you like, if you can but eat when I have done so.

How came you to suppose I did not know Lausiliere? Was it not him who was always riding about with Madame de Prye, just as la P*** does with Mademoiselle Desmazy? they rode together in the bois de Boulogne, the very evening before she went into exile.

I am very glad you complain of stupidity; it is a proof that you can suit your mind to your residence; and upon arriving at Forges, you should have locked up your soul in a box, there to remain, till you were again upon the high road to Paris: still, notwithstanding your torpidity, I cannot patiently endure the delays of the post. I begin now to think that when you are in Heaven, you will not rise from your arm-chair, even for *St. James the minor*, as you soon contrive to be perfectly at your ease every where. But what I most admire is your civility towards the pastry-cook's wife; though, as you are very fond of good eating, perhaps it was

 out

out of respect for her husband's talents; nay, probably had Harlequin (who is generally represented as being very greedy) been Emperor of the Moon, he would have done as much.

I inclose a letter from your brother, which I have read, as you desired me. I will forward yours to Madame de Luynes.

I expect our friend, who is to be with me at twelve; but this letter must go to the post before then; therefore I cannot talk politics with you before to-morrow. Yesterday it was reported that the conferences were broken off; notwithstanding, the King of Poland is not sparing of his troops; but he requires them to be brought into action; therefore, I do not think M. de Lans, his minister at our court, will encourage him to come forward in our behalf, as matters are now managed, since no one seems inclined to do any thing.

Madame de Forcalquier is to be presented on Wednesday; and I can also assure you, that *the tom cat* is more than ever resolved to contribute, as much as lies in his power, to her happiness—present, future, and to come. Indeed, he is by no means altered, though he may be rather more delicate in his ideas, and rather more sentimental since his marriage.

The Marechale desired me to say a variety of fine things to you; the Grinberghens were not

less

less polite. I have told you that I sup this evening at M. de Mirepoix's; to-morrow night I sup with the cousin Montigny; I will tell you who is of the party, though I dare say you will hardly believe me; therefore, you perceive I do not take much advantage of your absence. But let me intreat you would not leave my letters about.

Your brother's letter will convince you that he is as much disheartened as I am.

Adieu; here is enough for one time. My letters generally receive their stamp from yours; and if I am but convinced that you are really interested in all I do or say, I am very ready to communicate even my most private thoughts to you.

LETTER XXII.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

I HAVE played to-day twelve kings at la comete, and then a pool at quadrille; therefore I have made it later than usual before I sat down to write. But I am very happy that I have got rid of my party, that I may enjoy a snug paper *tête-à-tête* with you. I think you said all that was required to *the cats*, respecting their silly letter; and you did very right in giving them to understand that I should neither listen to, nor answer their jokes, respecting la P——. I agree that you are the first man in the world, to manage such sort of negociations, as you know exactly what to say, when to say it, and how to please both parties. Believe me, I have a much higher opinion of you than you suspect; and when you are quite natural, and neither wish to captivate nor to surprise, you are extremely amiable. For example, your letter of to-day is charming—you do not know how happy it has made me, and I will answer it immediately, having said all I have to say respecting the *cats*.

I am

I am convinced the letter to the King of Prussia is of Voltaire's writing; no one can be sufficiently acquainted with his peculiar mode of expressing himself, to have imitated him so closely—" *A little citizen does little things,*" &c. Who else would ever have adopted that expression? I could swear he wrote it, only from that single sentence. But how it came into circulation, I cannot even divine. But I imagine, situated as we now are, his imprudence will be overlooked. I can suppose la du Chatelet is gloriously uneasy. Madame de Rochefort is very sincere, but not more so than your humble servant, nor more attached to you. Forcalquier might make the same comparison which you have done, (if he ever either remarked or compared any thing); and I should then be as much *the Seine* as she is, and she would be as much the *sea* as I am.

I believe the Abbé is the kitten's knight; but you would not approve of my having *so intimate a friend:* when we act the part of the confident, we are allowed to peep behind the curtain, which must be very amusing, when we have to do with sincere and well-bred people. When we act the principal part in the drama, we seldom see below the surface, which often varies, and does not allow us to form a very wise judgment, as we seldom take the trouble to examine

any thing, since love is always blind. But you perfectly well know what I think, what I am, and what I am most inclined to cavil about. Case in point—are you serious, when you say that I wish to be spared the trouble of being grateful, when I seem to doubt of your regard for me? Do you really think that such is my motive? If so, how wrong you are! you must perceive, that when I remark the least proof of real love for me in what you say or write, it performs as great miracles as the grain of mustard of the Evangelist—it transports mountains. But you very seldom suffer me to enjoy this illusion, or perhaps this fact: but I will not pursue the subject, as I do not like to fish in troubled waters. These waters will certainly do me good; I am only afraid of eating too much, as I have a prodigious appetite, and I am particularly fond of beef; I cannot bear either capons or fowls; beef or mutton I think delicious. I only dine, as I never eat any thing of an evening. To-day I was afraid I had eaten too much, but I feel myself as light as ever; therefore, I am resolved to take two ounces of manna to-morrow. Thursday I shall again take the waters; we are to dine on that day at the Rosambeaus'; this I shall consider as a very great restraint, though I agree that this sort of constraint is a very salutary remedy for ennui, since whatever breaks in upon the monotony

tony of such a life as I now lead, must dispose the mind to gaiety.

D'Argenson pleases me, he so readily acknowledges that he never remembers his absent friends. Tell him that I feel really obliged to him, for caring so little about what I do or what becomes of me, as it convinces me that he will be happy to see me again. I shall be quite a novelty, and of course very amusing; and as he has not, of late, had the fatigue of paying me any degree of attention, he will be as friendly towards me as his disposition will allow him to be: such are my thoughts of him, whom I really like; and I entertain nearly the same opinion of many of my other friends. Shall not you be tempted to complain, to find yourself excepted? I dare say you are, only you dare not give way to your bad humour.

Apropos, I no longer grow frightful, since positively my complexion is very much improved: but I dress like an apple-woman—I say in excuse for doing so, that I am old, lazy, and an invalid. I never rise from my chair for those whom I have seen once before; I return no visits; in short, I do just as I please; and I am more Madame Tonneins here, than in the Rue de Baune.

Poor Formont is all alone in a corner of my room. I take leave of you with regret; but I

must bear him company. Are you inclined to do him a great favour? send us the last observations of the Abbé Desfontaines, and all those which appear every week. Adieu, till to-morrow.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

17th July.

I RECEIVED your letter of Thursday and Friday, earlier than usual, yesterday. I could not resist the temptation I felt to read to d'Argenson the paragraph which concerns him; and when he came to that part where you have so kindly turned against me the little use I have made of your absence, he burst into a violent fit of laughter: he declares we ought no longer to be surprised at their hanging innocent people—nay, he affirms, that neither Luther, Zuingle, nor Calvin, can come up to your instep. But I forgive you all this, if it arises, as I must suppose, from my being continually in your thoughts, as I had much rather know you to be unjust, than to find that you are indifferent respecting me or my concerns. Therefore, to continue to *deceive* you respecting my motives for such conduct, I supped yesterday at Madame de Mirepoix's. I had visited Madame d'Aumont during the afternoon,

noon, where I met Madame Maurepas, and we talked a good deal of our friend. They are both enthusiasts in his cause; but that is not enough. All that I can say to you is, that if the Abbey is given to any one within the week, he will certainly have it. But the Abbot will not resign; and sometimes they think him dying—the next morning he is better. The Father Prior is quite tired out; yet he has not the sense to come to a final determination.

I went from thence to Madame de Mirepoix's, where I supped with her and her husband, Monsieur and Madame de la Valliere, Madame de Flamarens, the President de Montesquieu, and Pierrot. Her repast was very gay; we reasoned a great deal, and talked very wisely; not an epigram was heard, nor were there any debates. We then played at piquet: Madame de Mirepoix and Madame de Valliere against Pierrot and me. I talked a good deal with Madame de Flamarens in the beginning of the evening; and I asked the whole party to sup with me on Saturday. Mirepoix, as he always does, talked with his elbows, and reasoned with his chin; but, upon the whole, he is an upright well-meaning man—heavy, but polite, reserved, but civil, &c. &c. I mentioned to Madame de Flamarens what I had heard respecting the private theatricals. She thinks the troops ought to be united. I told her I was of

the

the same opinion; but I much doubted their agreeing to do so. She is not sure she shall be able to sup with me on Saturday, because Madame de Forcalquier is to be presented. I was obliged to admit of such an excuse, since she will not be to blame if she cannot come. She does not think the discourse of the Abbé Rainel so bad as many people say it is: she is quite of your opinion, and so am I. You have not given me your opinion of Mairan's discourse. M. de Richelieu sets out, it is said, on Monday, for Languedoc. They affect to believe that he was afraid M. de Mirepoix should go in his stead. Voltaire has written to Madame de Mailly, which was wiser than if he had written to the King of Prussia. They say she has promised him an answer; if so, she is in a much better temper with him. Brutus continues to be the general admiration: there has been many alterations, and some entire new scenes. Upon the whole, it is one of the best tragedies that has ever been acted, and by much the best of any of Voltaire's. The fifth act is particularly interesting. But to return to your letter—After having explained, after your own fashion, the motives of my conduct, you conclude by asking—"*But do you regret me? Do you miss my society? I do not believe you do.*" Then you never were more mistaken: I do regret you, I do greatly miss your society. I agree that I endeavour to

divert

divert myself, because I know you are in very good health, and I know that you are likely to be in still better. Did I entertain any doubts upon that point, I should be miserable; but while I know you are fast recovering your strength, your appetite, and your good looks, I find every thing agreeable. My mouth is never shut; I have had a sort of thaw of words since your departure, as I am no longer in awe of your superior judgment, which congeals a great deal of my nonsense before I give it utterance; but I now decide at random, generally approve of everything; and, when I have thus exhausted my brains and lungs, I endeavour to renew my vigour by writing to you. You tell me you sleep well. This is a very essential article; but perhaps you may have had a bad night before you will receive my letter, and this will put you in a passion with my, in that case, *malapropos* congratulations.

Madame de la Valliere gave me a letter of Nivernois's to read. He did not receive the letter I wrote him six weeks ago, till within these few days. He sends you a thousand compliments. The letter is, in other respects, friendly, interesting, and full of good advice. She also told me she means to go into the country with Madame de Mirepoix. I am to sup with them to-morrow night at Meudon; but guess where I sup to-night? But I believe I have already told you—at the

the cousin Montigny's. But you do not know who I am to meet: First, M. Dufort, whom I now consider as rather a person of consequence, as I hope, through his means, to be able to send you a great many pamphlets; the other guests are, Madame d'Aubeterre, Madame de Sassenage, and, above all, our Gascon Picarde, Madame d'Etiolles, Geliot, &c. &c. My cook is to prepare the supper: he treated them very well, I was told, the other day, at Pont de Veyle's. They are to give us Issé to-day, and you may believe that I shall not miss such a treat.

There is nothing new in politics; we continue wholly inactive—that is, the court does: I presume they think it wisest to leave everything to chance; since, were five or six more crowned heads to die, we should not derive any advantage from the circumstance.

I presume Formont has been with you since yesterday. I congratulate you upon his arrival, and him upon being near you. The brigade is given to M. de Pont-Saint-Pierre. D'Ussé's suit is to be finally judged on Monday.

Apropos, you say that I consider it a sort of duty to frequent your friends'; and pray, are they not also mine? and may I not seek their society, upon my own account? I am obliged to you, nevertheless, for thinking yourself a party concerned in my politeness towards them; and I agree that I

am rather actuated by a wish to oblige you, when I visit them: yet I should certainly do so, were you totally out of the question; and this for two very good reasons—they please me, and their reception of me leads me to suppose that I please them. Possibly I am rather indebted to you for the rank I hold in their esteem; so much the better: I feel more flattered than if I was merely indebted to my own merit. At all events, I take advantage of the circumstance, as it *attracts* me into their circle. But all this nonsense is merely meant to convince you that you endeavour to make me out in the wrong; but I believe your intentions are very good; and if you do but love me, you know I can forgive your injustice towards me. Good day. I embrace you, with all my soul, in imagination.

LETTER XXIV.

The same to the same.

18th July.

You are of an easy temper, and by no means romantic! I pity you for not being the last, as you certainly are a great loser, in not having a little spice of romance in your disposition; yet it appears to me that you once could have vied with me in that respect. But I perceive that you now deem it *outré* romance to mention the full moon, as recalling to one's mind past pleasures, or to dwell upon the bowers under which we may have walked with those we loved; but it is worse still to hint, that the mind is more attuned to tender recollections at one time than another, particularly if the weather seems to have any influence upon our feelings—in short, you are inclined to condemn everything that your fancy borders on the regions of poetry or romance; yet I believe we may sometimes feel a degree of enthusiasm bordering on the latter, without appearing either absurd or ridiculous. But possibly it may be as well to check what you deem my folly, in the bud.

Very

Very well; I plead guilty, and humbly beg your pardon for all my *purling streams*, past, present, and to come, for their near relations the *nightingales*, their cousins the *shady bowers*, and for their grandfather *sentimental prose*. I have done with them all. In future, my letters shall merely contain all the news I can pick up, which is likely to amuse you. I therefore, once for all, shall adopt the historical style, and never venture to speak of myself, except I am materially concerned in the facts I may have to relate.

I went yesterday to the opera. The house was as full as you have seen it at Atys. Le Maure never sung so well; everybody was lost in admiration of him. But to come to Chassé: He looks rather older, and I do not think his voice is so fine as it was when he left the theatre; to be sure, he had a cold, which might make him rather hoarse; in other respects, he is greatly improved: his action and his expression was inimitable. At times, he reminded me of Thevenart, particularly in the tender scenes, as he seemed perfectly to feel and understand the character. The scene in the third act was repeatedly interrupted by bursts of applause. *Le Sommeil* was sung delightfully; and, upon the whole, I never was better pleased. All those to whom I spoke agreed they had been highly entertained. Pont de Veyle alone, who is prejudiced against him, will

will not alter his opinion. I went afterwards to walk in the Palais Royal, where I met M. and Madame de Mirepoix and Madame de la Valliere, who were going to sup with Madame Dupin. The married pair seemed doomed to spend their evening *tête-à-tête*. M. de Richelieu is certainly going into Languedoc; but not because he dreads M. de Mirepoix's preceding him thither, but because there have been some tumults there; and it is said that the King of Sardinia has excited a revolt in the Cevennes. Some fears are also entertained respecting Provence, as the letters from that part of the world seem to apprehend an attack upon the castle of Este. The Queen of Hungary has declared, that she will have no other mediator but the King of England, who was the only prince in Europe who assisted her in her distress. We, meanwhile, come to no decision; which is incredible. The comptroller-general is much better; M. Dufort told me yesterday, that la Peironnie had assured him he was quite cured.

We did not perceive that Geliot had sung at the opera; but it appeared to me that he was among his acquaintance. There was also one of the prettiest women I ever saw—Madame Etiolles. She is an excellent musician, sings with the greatest gaiety and the greatest taste, has a hundred songs at her tongue's end, and acts plays

at Etiolles, in a very handsome private theatre, which is extremely well provided with scenes and machinery. But it is at Paris only that we can boast of such an agreeable mixture of society; indeed, every one here seems all anxiety to contribute to the amusement of others. I was particularly requested to visit Etiolles, which is situated in a delightful part of France, and where I spent my youth, as my father was then Lord of Etiolles; but it has been greatly improved since his time. These details will, to you, be very uninteresting; nor will you be better pleased with me for telling you, that I was in my usual place at the opera, next to M. de Rouroi, who inundated me with his *foam*.

No misfortune will befal Voltaire, for the same reason that no misfortune has befallen the Queen of Hungary:—*we* are too lazy to come to any determination. I am very glad *we* are so, upon his account.

No new pamphlets have appeared of late. Madame d'Autrec is expected to be here very soon. Madame du Chatelet is in her new house.

I had half a mind to have talked with Madame de Mirepoix respecting her theatricals: if her husband had not been with her, I should have done so. We took two turns together, M. de Mirepoix and me, and we were very much at a loss what to say to each other.

Madame de Rochefort is perfectly recovered. Her heart is only vulnerable on one side; and as she has not been attacked in her weak part, she seems very happy—at least, her countenance bespeaks her to be so.

Since the *absurd* letter which you received came from Forcalquier, it was certainly of less importance; but he seems aware that he acted very sillily, so wishes to turn the Abbé de Sades into ridicule, for having taken so much more pains with his letter.

I would not have you alarm yourself because you grow thin; the Forges waters often have that effect, and are therefore of the more service, as you will soon begin to increase in size when you return.

LETTER XXV.

The Marchioness du Deffand to the President Henault.

10th July.

I could not devote a single moment to you yesterday: I had a succession of visitors during the whole day, who were almost good company, in comparison to those I was plagued with during the first fortnight. They were, Madame de Rosambeau; Madame Hareng, who is by no means deficient in sense, does not want for taste, and seems, upon the whole, a very good sort of woman; Lauzilieres, who has a sort of under-look, which is either indicative of deceit or mystery, I cannot decide which, but he does not want for wit. They staid with me till very late. La P——— was seized with a violent fit of hysterics. She was really frightful to look at, and her screams and cries were dreadful. I fancy she takes the waters very improperly. She took an opening draught the other morning, and in the evening swallowed a glass of some elixir, which was recommended to her by a surgeon, who came with Madame de Rosambeau;

Rosambeau; this made her very ill, and certainly quite cleared her stomach; since which the waters have never agreed with her. Yesterday, Formont and I were settling how we must act, in case she died; for she is, as I have always declared, mad, absolutely and decidedly insane. But do not tell Silva so. We are going to-day to dine with the Rosambeaus, and therefore I took my waters early, as we are to dine at twelve o'clock. So I am writing to you, contrary to the rules and orders of the medical tribe; but the waters never fly to my head; and when I do not write, I make chenille flowers, which are the admiration of all Forges.

Formont is a most delightful companion, particularly in such a place as this. He has no wish to make any new acquaintances, but gives up all his time to me, and is as gay and as complaisant as it is possible to be; never seems weary, and yet does not seem to pride himself upon his politeness. I was never more pleased with him, and positively I required the society of such a friend. He cannot stay with me all the time I mean to remain here; but he has promised to spend a month with me.

I am very impatient for your letter of to-day, as I am really anxious to hear what has been done respecting our friend. He is a strange man, this same friend of ours, and is the exact reverse of

most others: he renders people his partizans, by always coming to their aid when they require his services, since he does not seem to care for anybody, if he cannot exert himself in their behalf. I dare say he almost forgets that such people are in existence. I feel very much the same with respect to him: I would go to the very extremities of the world to serve him, and yet I should never think of making any inquiries respecting him, when I write to you; or, to speak more properly, I should not wish him to suppose that I either thought of him or liked him; yet I should really like to know how he went on, as I should be very uneasy were he ill.

Adieu; I must conclude, as I have something else to do than to gossip with you.

Formont desires to be particularly remembered to you.

LETTER XXVI.

The same to the same.

20th July.

M. d'Arg—— is then no longer surprised at innocent people being sometimes hanged, and does me the honour to think that my subtility and my sophisms are far superior to those of Luther, Calvin, &c. But are not both of you inclined to suspect, that your texts are sufficiently obscure to admit of various interpretations? therefore, is not it you who are so cunning and so heretical, and, as such, rather deserving of the honours of martyrdom? but were either of you to be condemned to be hanged or burnt, I cannot think that one could throw your *innocence* in the teeth of your judges; since, positively, I should make no scruple of condemning you both; though I should greatly regret the being obliged to do so, as I hope that you will, in time, become more orthodox.

You have really given me hopes, which I fear, nevertheless, will never be realised. May I believe that our friend is likely to have such

fair play? I positively dare not do so, as I am not in the habit of seeing anything occur which would so greatly contribute to my satisfaction.

I am very glad you often see Madame de Mirepoix; she is very amiable. As for her husband, I believe he is very consequential. I am quite of your opinion respecting their private theatricals; let them manage matters how they please; I am perfectly easy respecting their arrangements.

I received a long letter yesterday from Madame de Flamarens. Her style is as warm as her heart; therefore I am convinced she loves me. She has a certain lively animated tone, which is very persuasive. She writes me that she had seen you, and had been very much pleased with you. I had drawn la P———, in my last letter to her, nearly in the same terms I did to you; therefore she will have presumed that I am my own echo; but she merely received a copy; your's was the original picture.

I found much to admire in M. de Richelieu's discourse; perhaps it may be rather too short, considering the place, and the gravity of the circumstance; but it is very pretty, very pathetic, and is certainly a great proof of his taste. The Abbé Reinel's is very good, till he comes to the conclusion of his panegyric upon the Abbé du Bos; but the rest of it is tiresome to a degree,

I have

I have not yet read M. Mairan's; but I mean to make the effort; though, if it all resembles the first six pages, nothing was ever so badly written, so flat, so common, so cold, &c. &c.

I dare say you regret my absence, or rather, that you very often think of me. But (and I think you are very right) you divert yourself as often and as much as you can. You are like the *Quietists**; you do all in *me*, by *me*, and for *me*; but, in fact, you do as well without *me*. Your time passes very agreeably, and you enjoy a certain degree of liberty, which you seem greatly to relish; and you are happy to think that I am meanwhile endeavouring to lay in a stock of health for the winter. I do not sleep very well; I think I eat too much. Yesterday, I left off beef; to-day, I mean to reduce my usual allowance of bread. I have not heard from Madame de la Valliere this long time. I am really sorry, for I like her very much. I burnt her last letter, for which I am also very sorry, as it was extremely well written, and I should have liked to have shewn it you. Nivernois does not *hate* her; and I do not think he *loves* any other.

I hope you mean to enter into many details respecting your supper and M. Dufort, as they will divert me. You will also mention the opera, though I feel much less anxious to hear your opinion

* A religious sect.

opinion of that. Shall I tell you why?—we have often quarrelled respecting *operas*, as you can hardly forgive anybody for being of a different opinion upon *musical* subjects; therefore they seldom increase our *harmony*.

I can hardly suppose that *we* are so inactive respecting our political concerns as you seem to suppose. *We* may be more *secret*, and the M——s are not perhaps in *our* confidence.

D'Ussé never writes to me; and du Chatel, who used to do so from Corsica, does not *condescend* to do so from Paris. This is abominable, since, in my opinion, he ought, in common politeness, to inquire how the waters agree with me.

Certainly my friends ought also to be your's. This is the gospel which I have always preached to you; but you never seemed to put any faith in what I said. I am glad to hear that you are now convinced I was in the right: you ought to have been so long since, as I am well convinced that it is not merely upon my account that they like you; though you have always made a very great merit of noticing them, which you have often declared was merely to oblige me; and you never, when speaking of them, distinguished them by any other title than "*my friends.*" But I do not wish to place to my account any civility that they either may have shewn you, or mean to display

display towards you, though I must be a gainer by your being upon intimate terms with them; but I am fully persuaded that they are very anxious to cultivate your acquaintance for their own gratification, as you must be liked for yourself, and would be so by them, even were you my enemy.

I dined yesterday at Madame de Rosambeau's. They said the dinner was badly chosen, and badly cooked; but I found everything excellent—indeed, I have so good an appetite, that nothing can come amiss to me. We are to have a party of twelve to dine with us on Sunday; we have already asked all the most consequential people here, and we mean to treat them well; therefore have given our orders in consequence.

I returned all my visits yesterday. I send you a list of all those I saw. Let me know whether you ever heard of any of them before. Adieu. I will conclude by-and-bye.

Friday, half past one.

Don't talk of correcting either your style or your sentiments: I like you should indulge your taste for *shady bowers, running streams, sparrows,* &c. as it enables me to contradict you, to worry you, and to torment you; and this really adds to the good effects of the waters. I have just received a letter from du Chatel, which

which is beautifully obscure, and sorrowfully gay; in short, wholly incomprehensible. I have also received one from la du Chatelet, who has sent me the Harangues and Mairan's Panegyric. She seems very much hurt respecting Voltaire's silly adventure. When you write to me again, pray mention my *Maqui*, which is a very suitable nick-name for la P———; and tell me whether you have been surprised to hear of her folly, though all she says and all she does is exactly of a piece with her general turn of mind.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

The same to the same.

21st July.

I DESIRED you yesterday not to make any reform in the style of your letters; if any thing displeases me in them, it is not the *spirit of romance* which you display. I merely declare war against the contradictions; and if ever I permit myself to laugh at your *day dreams,* it is because *fine phrases* do not satisfy me so well as good plain sense and reason; nor do they dazzle me sufficiently, to make me lose sight of more important objects. Though, believe me, I have no objection to prose run mad, or to poetical flights; but the concurring circumstances, the mode of introducing them, and the subjects to which they relate, are the greatest criterions of their *sterling value.*

I am very glad Chassé succeeded so well; another of my correspondents is no less eloquent in his praise. What you say respecting the reason of M. de Richelieu's departure, may prove of very serious consequence; are the facts absolutely

lutely ascertained? Do not be unfaithful to *us*, in favour of Madame d'Etiolles. You were right not to mention the private theatricals to Madame de Mirepoix; let her manage matters how she pleases.

No, I do not believe my letters weary you, and it was very wrong to say I feared they did; since I am, on the contrary, fully persuaded that they afford you a great deal of pleasure, and that they fill up a *corner* in the day very agreeably; if I was not of this opinion, I should not write you such volumes. I agree that I enjoy writing to you, but if I did not think you also enjoyed reading what I write, I should never find time to scribble five or six pages every day. I dare say you find it equally amusing to write to me; the length of your letters, and the style of them, is a convincing proof that they are written *con amore*.

You profess a degree of veneration for Madame de Rochefort, which I think very diverting, as it is the exact reverse of "*the beam in the eye:*" I dare say her vanity is very much flattered by her triumphs, which are certainly not equivocal, nay, they are even glorious: she might not have been insensible to some others; at all events, I dare say there are *certain rivals*, who would not occasion her much uneasiness, and of whom she would hardly condescend to think; we have had

a proof

a proof of this in *Mother Gaines;* but every thing that does not belong to you, is sure to appear admirable in your eyes; possession always diminishes the value of every thing in your opinion. But what signifies? You love me after your own fashion, and I neither ought nor can I expect you should like me after the fashion of any other person. I always supposed that at the expiration of thirty years, you would begin to believe I loved you, and that you would by that time no longer be jealous of my levity.

The *Maqui* has been in agonies, owing to repletion; but she now restricts herself to a very severe regimen; the waters therefore begin to do her good, and her strength returns, to the great annoyance of our ears, for her tongue is never still; she picks up a multitude of anecdotes at the fountain, which we are doomed to hear repeated; as well as to listen to the wonderful discoveries she daily makes, which are so many proofs of her profound wisdom and sagacity. She is now fully acquainted with the character of Madame Coupe-sac, as well as with that of M. Banche; and this she tells him in very plain terms; therefore she has plenty of amusement cut out for her leisure hours: we mean to endeavour, Formont and me, to bring her to propose

pose leaving here about the end of August, that is to say, about the 26th or 27th; since, if she defers her departure, we may not set out before the 5th or 6th of September; but it will require no trifling degree of art to induce her to accede to our wishes, as she never was more in her place; for her mind is like the walls of an alehouse, which require no tapestry, as coloured halfpenny prints answer just the same purpose. There are many odd characters in the world, but I think she is the strangest compound I ever met with. Adieu, till by-and-bye.

Apropos, I think I have written a tolerable good answer to du Chatel, whose letter, as I believe I told you, is sorrowfully *impertinentissima.*

Twelve o'clock at noon.

I have just received your letter: the death of little d'Argenson is a most dreadful circumstance; I am extremely sorry for him, particularly on account of his father, to whom I think I ought to write; I will send you my letter, that you may deliver it, if you think proper.

Your letter seems very dry; from whence does that proceed? Do not sulk with me; the only

only real pleasure I enjoy here, is that of reading your letters; if you abridge them, if I do not find them natural and easy, I shall be seriously afflicted. Adieu.

LETTER XXVII.

The President Henault to the Marchioness du Deffand.

20th July.

M. d'Argenson came yesterday morning to my house, with the grand prior, who had been to see him, and who brought him from home, that he might not be in the way to receive the compliments of condolence, which pour in upon him from every quarter, and which are truly insupportable, when our affliction is sincere; they remained with me while I dressed, when the prior took his leave, and M. d'Argenson and me set out for Auteuil. We dined there, and spent the afternoon; we then took a turn in the wood of Boulogne; and as we returned, we called at my door; the porter gave me a letter from you, and I went home with him to supper: our party were Madame d'Argenson, the prior, le Normant, and Montcrif. Such is the history of my day. The reports differ so much every succeeding day, that I hardly know what to believe. The troubles in the Cevennes are said to be

be very serious; there are, if rumour may be believed, four thousand men in arms, and there are not five hundred soldiers in Languedoc. Our coast is daily menaced by the enemy's cruisers, who seem particularly to threaten Dieppe. The King of Sardinia has, they say, hinted, that it does not suit him to suffer the infant to remain any longer in France.

END OF THE CORRESPONDENCE.

THE

PORTRAIT, CHARACTER, OR DESCRIPTION,

Of M. d'Alembert, written by the Marchioness du Deffand.

D'Alembert is the son of unknown parents; he had, therefore, no natural protectors, and, it may be said, no fortune; he merely received that common education, which is bestowed upon most children above the rank of paupers; no one, during his youth, endeavoured to cultivate his talents, or to improve his mind. The first thing that he learned when he began to think, was that he belonged to no one. He consoled himself for being thus abandoned, with the reflection that it rendered him completely independant: but as his judgment ripened, he severely felt all the *disagreeables* which are attached to such a situation; and he sought for resources within himself, to enable him to bear up against such a misfortune. He conceived himself to be the child of Nature, and that he ought, in consequence, to be wholly guided by her laws; (and he has always continued fixed in these

 principles);

principles); that his rank and title in the universe was that of man; and that no persons of the same sex could be either above or below him; that the only distinctions between them were those which virtue and vice, talents and stupidity, must necessarily make, as the one must inspire others with respect, the other with contempt; that liberty was the only real advantage which a wise man wished to enjoy; that every one might acquire this real blessing, and might enjoy it, if he did but keep his passions under proper subjection.

That he might be able to do so, he applied himself very diligently to the most abstruse studies; as the activity of his mind did not permit him to confine himself to any particular one, he was, after a time, master of every science, and his knowledge was as various as it was profound; he formed his taste by reading the best ancient Greek and Latin writers, and was very soon able to imitate, if not to equal them; till at last his genius unfolded itself, and he stepped forth into the world a prodigy. The simplicity of his manners, the purity of his morals, his air of youth, and the openness of his character, in addition to his very superior talents, at first astonished all those who saw him: but he was not equally admired by every one; some people only saw in him a young man, without usage of

the world. To those, his simplicity and his sincerity, merely appeared the effect of vulgar ingenuity. The only merit which they remarked in him, was his talent for mimicry, as he can imitate any stranger, with the most exact minuteness; this amused them, but, in other respects, they thought him beneath their notice.

His first entrance into the world sufficed, therefore, to disgust him with it; and he soon sought for happiness, in a life of retirement and seclusion: he gave himself up, more than ever, to the study of philosophy; and soon after his retreat, he published his Essay upon Men of Letters, and their Patrons, &c. &c. This work had not the success which he had a right to expect it would have had; the great thought it was robbing them of their titles, to advise authors not to seek their protection; and the men of letters did not relish advice so likely to frustrate their interested views; therefore, both the patrons and the patronized, became his enemies. He was now considered as a very proud man. All that he had said in favour of liberty was thought to favorize licence; and his regard for truth was as badly interpreted as was his disinterestedness. The contempt which he felt for such critics, the silence which he observed, the wisdom of his conduct, and, in short, his real merit, which

which always triumphs, sooner or later, over envy, have forced his enemies to do him justice, or at least, to remain silent; they no longer dare raise their heads, in opposition to the voice of the public.

D'Alembert enjoys that high degree of reputation, due to his very eminent talents, and to the constant and regular practice of all the greatest virtues.

Generosity and sincerity form the basis of his character; upon which is grafted humanity towards others, and a great degree of feeling; in short, he may boast of uniting every essential quality: yet he does not possess all those requisite to give him a certain degree of consideration in society; he is rather deficient in point of gentleness and amenity, which are so necessary to render a person truly agreeable; nor does his heart seem to be formed of very tender materials; and I am inclined to believe that he has more virtue than sentiment. No one can, with him, experience the pleasure of being of use to him, as he neither asks nor requires any thing of his friends; he had much rather do them a service, than be indebted to them for one done to himself. Gratitude, in his opinion, becomes a duty, and all duties clash with his notions of liberty. Every restraint, and all con-

straint, of whatever nature it may be, he deems insupportable; and he was perfectly defined, when it was said that he made himself the slave of his favourite Liberty.

PORTRAIT

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Marchioness du Chatel, addressed to herself, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

I AM resolved, Madam, to attempt to delineate your character and disposition: I know that few things can escape your penetration; but yet I do not think that you are thoroughly acquainted with yourself. Learn, therefore, from me, that you are very sensible, and that your judgment is both capacious and penetrating; that you form a very proper opinion of every thing—are naturally of a very gay and very happy temper—that your manners are dignified, and your wit is tempered by your good sense; in a word, you possess every requisite to please and be pleased. The only fault I can discover in you is your timidity; the world deem it excessive modesty; but I should be tempted to believe that it arose from a certain degree of self-love, which you do not seem to understand. I will endeavour to explain my meaning.

Self-love, in almost every body, generally mingles with their vanity; they esteem themselves,

selves in the same proportion as they love themselves; and their esteem for themselves also greatly decreases, when they entertain a higher opinion of any other person.

You are a singular exception to the general rule; the more you love yourself, the less amiable you think yourself; you then begin to entertain a sort of mistrust of yourself, which, by making you lose the hope of pleasing, also makes you lose the wish. This consequence of your self-love is so rarely to be met with, that it gives a great degree of singularity to your character, and is rather a drawback upon your gentleness. You are very much struck with the agreeable qualities of others; you compare them to yourself, and you fancy that you neither possess the talents nor the merit which you remark in them. You become angry with yourself—you feel discouraged—and you become anxious for solitude and retirement.

Therefore let me entreat, Madam, that you would endeavour to prevent your self-love from taking the alarm so speedily: others merely appear to advantage in your eyes, because they possess a sort of assurance, which allows them to make free use of their wit and their imagination; only contrast what they say with the facility with which they express themselves, and you will perceive that it only rests with yourself to

outvie

outvie them, and to leave them entirely in the background. I know that though you are often dazzled by the merit of others, you are never jealous of their supposed superiority; therefore you are sincere in your praise of them; and you always do them more than justice, since you only feel angry with yourself.

It was reserved for you, Madam, to teach us, that a tincture of vanity is by no means a failing; or, to speak more properly, that to entertain a mean opinion of oneself, is a much greater. Since this sort of mistrust, or contempt of your own talents, makes you fancy yourself very miserable, when you might rank among the foremost of the happy, it is this which arrests the powers of your understanding; and it is this which renders you so little accessible to friendship, since it inspires you with fear and with reserve, and it deprives you of one of the greatest pleasures we mortals are permitted to enjoy; it prevents you from opening your heart, and from believing yourself to be beloved: and it does you a still greater injury, Madam; the bitterness which it diffuses over your mind, sometimes communicates itself to your temper—it then destroys your gaiety, and even deadens the brilliancy of your wit; your reflections become less just—you form to yourself an imaginary idea of human perfection and human happiness,

piness, which quite oversteps the bounds of nature; and this makes you lose all hopes of ever attaining to the one or of enjoying the other; which prevents you from deriving any benefit from the advantages for which you are indebted to nature and fortune.

Open your eyes, therefore, to your own merit —see yourself as others see you, and you will soon perceive that you are both liked and esteemed. You are loved, and your friendship is courted—do not repel these kind advances, by a want of confidence, and no one will be more perfect nor more amiable than yourself.

THE

THE PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Princess de Talmont, written by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The Princess de Talmont may boast of possessing both beauty and wit; her understanding seems to have been cast in a very lively mould; and she seems, as if by instinct, to have adopted that particular turn for pleasantry, so peculiar to the French nation. Indeed, she so readily conceives the ideas of others, that she often takes us in; and we frequently do her the honour to believe, that she is speaking her own sentiments, when she is merely repeating those of others. Her imagination is wholly devoid of fertility; and even her wit frequently displays the frivolity of her mind. She has neither sufficient connection, nor sufficient correctness in her ideas, to enable her to reason well upon serious subjects; but her conversation is easy, and may be said to be a compound of the agreeableness and levity of the French nation. Nor is either her figure or her countenance that of a foreigner: she may perhaps have rather the appearance of a stranger, though

though she is by no means singular. But her excessive vanity leads her into errors, which are by no means compatible either with our manners, our customs, or with the character of our nation; in that respect, she is truly foreign. Our vanity is of a much more sociable nature, as it inspires us with a wish to please; it also teaches us the means of doing so: while hers, which is truly Sarmatian, is destitute both of art and industry; she cannot even condescend to flatter those by whom she wishes to be admired. She seems to think herself entitled, by nature, to the homages, the praises, and the preference, of all those who surround her. She fancies herself an absolute perfect being; she makes no scruple of telling you that she does, and she requires you to believe her. Upon no other terms can you enjoy even the appearance of her friendship—I say the appearance, as she cannot bestow any real regard upon others, she is so very fond of her own dear self. Yet she would wish to be beloved, but merely out of vanity; her heart is absolutely devoid of feeling.

She is as jealous as she is vain; she must be the only object upon whom the praises and attentions of any society must be lavished. If any other person is even mentioned in favourable terms, she is sure to contradict the speaker, and to launch out into such immediate praise of herself,

herself, that those present cannot avoid, even in spite of their indignation, to laugh at the total want of art and ingenuity which she betrays.

Her temper is so bad, that it frequently renders her both miserable and ridiculous; she never knows what she wishes for, what she fears, what she hates, nor what she loves.

Neither her manners nor her looks are easy or natural: she carries her chin too high, and places her elbows too much behind her. Her looks are always studied: she wishes, by turns, to appear tender, disdainful, proud, and absent; her countenance never wears the impressions of her feelings; her softness is all affected; her anger may be sometimes natural.

She never keeps regular hours, but sits down to her toilet, to her dinner, or goes out, just as her caprice or her fantastical humour directs; she never pays any deference to her superiors, nor does she ever display either consideration or politeness towards her equals, much less any gentleness or humanity towards her servants.

She is feared and hated by all those who are forced to live with her. But this is not the case with those who merely see her in company, particularly the men; as the charms of her figure, a certain degree of coquetry, added to the dignity and the happy turn of her expressions,

sions, enchant many people: but she never makes a lasting impression upon any one; as her temper gives them timely notice of the danger they would incur, were they to become seriously attached to her.

Yet, notwithstanding all these faults, she may boast of many good qualities: she is very sincere; and even her pride has a sort of superior dignity. She has also a strong, or rather a courageous mind; and she is by no means deficient in point of probity: she is, in short, such a compound of good and evil, that we are at a loss to declare our real opinion of her. She pleases at one time, she shocks you at another—you like and you hate her, almost in a breath—and you feel inclined to seek her one minute, and to avoid her the next. It might therefore with truth be said, that she communicates her capricious humour to others.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Chevalier d'Aydie, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The Chevalier d'Aydie has an eager, firm, and vigorous mind; every thing that he says or does displays the strength and the warmth of his feelings. It was said of M. de Fontenelle, that instead of a heart, he had a double portion of brains: I should exactly define the Chevalier d'Aydie, were I to reverse the idea.

Neither his feelings nor his ideas are under the frigid controul of his judgment and reason; he always speaks as he thinks; his expressions are, in consequence, very strong and very energetic; sometimes he is at a loss for words to express his thoughts, and the effort which he then makes adds to the spirit and warmth of his discourse; he neither borrows the ideas, nor the opinions, nor the manners, of any one; what he thinks and what he says, is always original and always natural; and he is a convincing proof, that the language of the heart is always sublime and truly eloquent.

 But

But the heart has not always the faculty of feeling; it has moments of repose and of inactivity. When these occur, the Chevalier is no longer the same man; the brilliancy of his understanding vanishes; a dark cloud seems to hang over his mind; if he speaks, it is no longer with the same eloquence; his ideas are no longer correct, nor have his expressions the same energy; they are merely exaggerated; he seems to be seeking for what he can no longer find: the original has disappeared, the copy only remains.

Though the Chevalier d'Aydie seems a sort of volcano, with respect to feeling, he is, nevertheless, neither the most tender man in the world, nor the most susceptible of a lasting attachment; he is affected by too many different objects, ever to distinguish any one in particular; his mind is accessible to every sort of impression; merit, of whatever kind, is sure to rouse his sensibility. In his company, you may appreciate the measure of your own worth, as he seems more or less pleased, in proportion as he likes or dislikes you; and this sort of approbation is much more flattering, than that which proceeds from the mind in which the heart takes no concern.

He cannot remain a quiet spectator of the follies of his fellow-creatures; every action which militates against his strict notions of probity provokes his anger; he is the decided enemy of vice,

vice, and not very indulgent towards mere follies; he is therefore the terror of the wicked, and very much dreaded by fools, who nevertheless dare, in their turn, to censure the severity of his morals, and what they deem the ostentation of his virtues; they say that people who are really good, are more indulgent, more easy, and more simple. The Chevalier is too much the slave of his passions, to be of a very easy temper; but what may be deemed his inequalities, are rather agreeable than troublesome; sometimes sad, but never melancholy, often inclined to misanthropy, but never savage; he is always singular and original, in whatever frame of mind he may chance to be. Even his faults have their merits, and we should be sorry to see him more perfect.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Count de Cereste, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The countenance of the Count de Cereste convinces you, that he is mild, sensible, and by no means deficient in point of wit; and the simplicity and elegance of his manners, are sure to conciliate the esteem of all those who know him.

He unites in himself all the attributes of a superior mind, correctness, reason, discernment, and penetration; his merit is, in consequence, generally acknowledged. He pleases some by the rare qualities of his mind, others by the excellence of his character, and every one by his ease and courteous disposition. No man was ever judged so impartially; every body does him justice; he is the only man who ever knew how to rob envy of its sting; his simplicity and his moderation induces every one to look up to him as their model, and no one seems to dread him as a rival: indeed, all his good qualities bear so exact a proportion to each other, that

no

no single one ever preponderates. Therefore, they do not awaken the jealousy of those who are anxious to be distinguished for any one in particular.

This very equilibrium of various excellent qualities, occasions a sort of equality in his conduct, which few circumstances are liable to derange, and which renders him a most unassuming but very agreeable companion: his conversation is almost a picture of his mind, as he can reason equally well upon the most opposite subjects; and he always varies it, according to the taste and the degree of understanding of those with whom he converses.

Yet you must not from this conclude, that the Count de Cereste is not of a very decided character. That he is a man of the most superior sense, every body agrees: no one can penetrate, can compare, can judge, or decide, with more quickness, or with more correctness; this is his most eminent talent, which renders him capable of holding the most elevated situations, and of undertaking the most difficult and intricate state affairs; but he never wishes to display the marked superiority of his judgment; possibly he may be afraid of its being too often called into action.

His soul being wholly exempt from all violent passions, has merely the degree of warmth which

is necessary to give vigour to his mind; every virtue is in him like sentiments and inclinations in others; they seem to have been born with him, and to remain his very willing slaves.

It now only remains to pronounce judgment upon his conduct, and the part he has taken in society. His birth, the capaciousness of his mind, his talents, and his genius, seemed to invite him to place himself amongst our greatest men. But though thus wonderfully gifted, Nature wisely taught him to moderate his ambition; it rested wholly with himself to have been illustrious—he preferred being wise: he was afraid of venturing upon the stormy sea which conducts to greatness, as he well knew that Happiness and Reason always seek an asylum in the house of Moderation.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Duchess d'Aiguillon, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The Duchess d'Aiguillon's mouth is sunk in her head, her nose is crooked, and her look is bold and unpleasing; yet, in spite of these defects, she is handsome—the beauty of her complexion prevents you from remarking the irregularity of her features.

Her shape is very clumsy, and her breast and arms are enormous; yet she neither appears heavy nor ill made; strength in her supplies the place of lightness.

Her mind greatly resembles her figure; it is as badly drawn as her face, and as dazzling in some respects; abundance, activity, and impetuosity, are its predominant attributes. She has no taste, no grace, no correctness; yet she often astonishes—but never pleases, much less interests.

Her countenance is wholly devoid of expression—all she says are the effusions of a disordered imagination.

She seems sometimes a prophet, inspired by a demon, who neither foresees, nor is permitted to chuse what she is to say; she may also be compared to a concert of noisy instruments, from which no harmony can be produced; or to a play overloaded with machinery and decorations, in which there are some wonderful fine parts; but they are produced in an improper place, and are lost for the want of connexion; the galleries may admire them, but they are hissed by those in the boxes.

We might also compare her to those statues which appear to great advantage upon a triumphal arch, but which strike us as being frightful, when placed upon the ground. Neither her face, her figure, nor her mind, will bear examination—to be admired, they must be seen at a distance: to judge favourably of her mind, you must be neither very enlightened, nor very delicate in your notions. Like the last trumpet on the day of judgment, she seems intended to raise the dead; men wholly devoid of passions are the only ones who can love her; and she ought only to be heard by the deaf.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Abbé de Vaubrun, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The Abbé de Vaubrun measures three cubits on his right side, and two and a half on his left, which renders his gait rather irregular; he carries his head high, and boldly displays a figure, which at first surprises, but which is not so displeasing as the oddness of his features would lead you to suppose.

His eyes may be said to be the exact contrary of his mind; they have more depth than surface: his laugh generally displays how fully he is satisfied with the productions of his imagination: he does not devote his time either to the study or the researches of solid learning, which can only be employed to advantage, among the very small number who can boast of a similar knowledge, or of their understanding and merit; he is merely occupied with trifling concerns: he is the first to disseminate the news of the day: it is from him you are sure to receive the first congratulations, in consequence of any agreeable

 occurrence:

occurrence: no one can display more gallantry, when making the most unmeaning compliment: no one is better aware of the consideration which attaches to those who are in the habit of living with men in place, or of illustrious birth: he is extremely active in the service of his friends; no man fulfils his duty towards them more scrupulously; he is as ready to attend them in their last moments, as he was to appear at their wedding: he has none of the tormenting delicacy so inseparable from real friendship; he is perfectly satisfied if he is well received; indeed, he is more flattered by being publicly noticed, than he would be by the assurance that he is really esteemed. The Duchess du Maine has perfectly defined his character, when she said, that he was the most sublime of all frivolous beings.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Duchess de Luynes, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The Duchess de Luynes was born as reasonable as others make it their endeavour to become; she is fond of pleasure, and is no enemy to dissipation, but she is never ardent in her pursuit of either. She feels herself in her place, when in the courtly circle; yet she is not very partial to making her appearance there, perfectly satisfied with the rank she holds at Versailles; she merely goes there as a duty, from which she often derives great amusement.

She has a very agreeable imagination, and a very good understanding; her repartees are very lively, and her judgment is very solid. All her resolutions are those of a woman of sense, who is never the dupe of the vivacity of her feelings. She can hardly be said to know the meaning of infatuation, nor does she consider any thing as repugnant; her understanding leads her easily to distinguish the good from the bad, the excellent from the ordinary; but her feelings are very seldom

seldom a party concerned; therefore, the little degree of interest which she takes in surrounding objects, induces her to submit too blindly to the general prejudices.

Her love of liberty, which was thought to be excessive, underwent some degree of alteration at the expiration of five-and-twenty years; since no sooner had the death of her mother left her absolute mistress of herself and of her actions, than she resolved, by marrying again, to place herself once more under the control of a husband; therefore, in my opinion, she never was really fond of liberty; indeed, it would not suit her disposition to be absolutely free of all control. She requires to have duties to fulfil —they form a sort of resting-place for her ideas, and are gratifying to her vanity, as they shed a sort of lustre upon her life and her occupations.

Liberty is not a blessing to every one; there are much fewer people than it might be supposed, who know how to make a good use of it, and who, it may be said, can sustain its void, or bear with its obscurity.

Madame de Luynes has a most happy equality of temper, and her heart is at once generous and compassionate. She fulfils all her duties, and no one displays more attention and regard to all around her: she renders all her relations superlatively happy: she is an excellent daughter,

an

an excellent wife, a model for all mothers, and the best of mistresses; possibly it might be more flattering both to her relatives and friends, if they did not perceive that reason, more than affection, is the *primum mobile* of her conduct towards them; yet this may be an unjust reproach; but it does not appear that they are so necessary to her happiness, as she is to theirs; indeed, all those who now live with her, would never be able to relinquish her society.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the President Henault, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

All the good qualities, and even all the faults of the President Henault, may be said to be to the advantage of society; his vanity renders him extremely desirous of pleasing, his easiness of temper enables him to conciliate the most opposite characters, and his weakness of mind merely deducts from his virtues, what frequently renders them rude and savage in others. His feelings are very acute and very delicate, but his wit is too often called in aid to explain and unravel them; therefore, as the heart seldom requires an interpreter, we are sometimes tempted to believe that he merely thinks what he fancies he feels; he seems to give the lie to M. de la Rochefoucault, who might perhaps, had he been acquainted with him, have said, "that the heart is often the dupe of the understanding."

Every thing concurs to render him the most amiable man in the world; he pleases some peo-

ple

ple by his good qualities, and many others by his greatest failings.

He is very impetuous, both in his disputes and in his approbation; he appears to be strongly affected by the objects which he sees, and by the subjects he discusses; but he passes so suddenly from the greatest vehemence to the greatest indifference, that it is easy to perceive his mind is easily moved, but that it is very rarely deeply affected: this very impetuosity, which would be a fault in any other, is almost a good quality in him; it gives to all his actions an air of sentiment and of feeling, which is very pleasing to the common run of people; every one thinks that he feels greatly interested in their concerns; this has therefore acquired him as many friends, as he has gained by his more estimable and more amiable qualities. He may be reproached with being too sensibly alive to this sort of success; it were to be wished that his anxiety to please was less general, and more under the direction of his discernment. He is free from all those passions which are the most likely to trouble his peace of mind; ambitious or interested views are unknown to him. His temper is naturally very equal and very gay, and if it ever varies, it arises from foreign causes, since very few circumstances derange his equanimity.

To

To the most ready wit he joins the greatest ease of expression, and the greatest delicacy of language; he may be said to be one of the most pleasant companions, as his raillery is as lively as it is harmless; his conversation is particularly ingenious and agreeable, and never degenerates into either puns or epigrams, which are likely to hurt the feelings of the company. He delights in discovering the beauties and the delicacies of languages or of writings, which are overlooked by the generality of hearers and readers; and the warmth with which he asserts their merit, leads us sometimes to suppose that he prefers them, to what is acknowledged by every body to be very fine; but in this we are mistaken, as he merely admires them as having, in a manner, brought them to light, which is certainly a proof of the delicacy of his taste, and of the ingenuity of his wit.

He may be said to possess every talent, and to discuss every subject equally well; the serious, the agreeable, or the comic, are all equally well handled. In short, the President Henault is the man in the world who unites the most agreeable qualities, and whose understanding and whose wit, are acknowledged to be of a very superior order, by all who know him.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Count de Forcalquier, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

Monsieur de Forcalquier's features, though not very regular, are very agreeable; the expression of his countenance, and even the negligence of his carriage, has in him something very dignified; his eyes are large, full, lively, and spirited; and he has that necessary degree of assurance, the natural consequence of high birth, and a thorough knowledge of the world.

The vivacity, the warmth, and the fertility of his imagination, cannot be sufficiently admired; it rises superior to all the other qualities of his mind; but he is too anxious to shine and to be remarked. His conversation is, in consequence, a compound of satirical strokes, epigrams, and bon mots. Far from wishing to render it easy and suitable to the understanding of his hearers, he is always anxious to debate upon every subject, and always takes the advantage of those who are least able to cope with him; who, in consequence, leave him both displeased with

 themselves

themselves and with him; and those whose vanity he has thus wounded, revenge themselves, by declaring him to be very malicious, by denying him any degree of superiority over themselves, and by averring that he possesses a very bad heart: he is the terror of fools, and a problem to men of wit, who dare not raise their voice in his defence, as they are obliged to agree that when he is in the humour, he carries his love of pleasantry much too far; nor do they admit there are any solidity or correctness in his decisions, much less in his sentiments: therefore M. de Forcalquier, in the midst of the great world, and with the greatest desire to be distinguished, has discovered the secret to remain in a manner unknown—and for this reason: it may appear a sort of paradox, but it is not less true.

The vanity of M. de Forcalquier is not supported by a sufficient degree of presumption; if he merely thought and decided in conformity to his own opinions, we could not avoid, even while condemning him, esteeming him, and we might often feel inclined to approve of his judgments; but owing to a sort of inexplicable distrust of himself, he never consults either his own taste or his own understanding, but chuses to adopt the ideas and the sentiments of those whom he thinks the most in fashion, or whom he

he conceives to be the most listened to in the great world: this conduct degrades him in the opinion of others, and even in his own eyes. Being therefore a martyr to foppery, without being able to become a fop, he ought long since to have been aware that he is not likely to shine in that character; he had much better endeavour to become a very good man; he might succeed in that attempt, but he never will in the other.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Duchess de Chaulnes, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

The mind of Madame de Chaulnes is of so strange a texture, that it is impossible to give the definition of it; it can only be compared to space *ad infinitum,* since it may be said to have all the necessary dimensions, depth, extent, and void; it assumes all sort of forms, and retains none; it contains a superabundance of ideas, all independant of one another, which perpetually destroy themselves, and are as constantly regenerated. She cannot be said to want any of the attributes of wit, and yet it can hardly be said that she possesses any one. At times she displays both judgment, reason, and abilities; but it is in the same manner as you would discern them in a magic lanthorn; they disappear as soon as they are discovered: all the gold of Peru passes through her hands, without her being the richer. As devoid of feeling as of passion, her mind is merely a flame without fire and

 without

without heat, but which nevertheless spreads a great light.

Every object strikes her, but none either attach or fix her notice; the impressions which she receives are merely momentary. The extreme activity of her imagination induces her to yield, without reflection and without examination, to her first movement: she will engage in an affair of gallantry, and then disengage herself, with such a degree of precipitation, that it is by no means unlikely she may forget not only the name, but even the face and figure of her lover: if she enters into any projects or intrigues, which require her to display the activity of her mind, she is neither deficient in point of ardor nor of intelligence, much less in point of ability, and she is in consequence very often successful; but if the circumstances are such as to require a great deal of patience, and that she should for a time remain inactive, she will very soon abandon the enterprise.

She will never either busy or interest herself, but respecting matters which require her to make some efforts; the most abstruse sciences are the only ones which have charms for her, not because they enlighten, but because they exercise her mind. Her faults cannot be attributed to her youth, as they are not the consequence of her passions; her heart is absolutely

insensible; her mind is seldom affected, therefore she has no excuse for acting without reflection; but to reflect is too slow an operation of the mind; it leads besides to recollection and forethought, and she never looks beyond the present moment.

From this it may be easily concluded that nothing can be said of her character, since it is, and always will remain, at the orders of her imagination.

The Duchess de Chaulnes is a being who has nothing in common with other women, but the exterior; she has the use and the appearance of all things, but neither the right nor the reality of any.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Count d'Argenson, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

M. d'Argenson has none of the faults attendant upon a weak mind; he is only susceptible of strong passions, and can only be affected by grand objects. Born proud and ambitious, he is unacquainted with the littleness of vanity, and with the manœuvres of intrigue; his talents are all he employs to raise his fortune, because he feels assured that they are all-sufficient.

It is neither from comparing himself to others, nor from reflection, that he derives the good opinion he has of himself; it is from a sort of instinct, which teaches him to appreciate his own worth. He thinks himself capable of every undertaking, and he never undertakes any thing in which he fails.

He is by no means anxious to render his partizans enthusiasts in his cause, therefore he never has recourse to either tricks or chicanery: his actions will all bear the strictest scrutiny. His mind has more strength than activity; not-

withstanding his ambition, his disposition leads him to be lazy.

His passions being thus contrasted, has perhaps contributed, more than any thing, to his becoming a great man, as it helps to regulate the movement of his mind, without weakening its springs. His courage, like all his other good qualities, is of a superior kind, and the sort which suits his place, as it is not of that rash nature which blinds the possessor to his danger, but, cool and collected, it enables him to foresee and prevent it ; and he possesses a firmness of soul, which enables him to surmount it, when it does overtake him. Every thing seems to conspire to lead him on to fortune.

His mind is not easily affected, nor is his heart very tender. He is flattered by the friendship of others, as he considers it as an unequivocal proof of his worth.

He is perhaps the only man who does not require a confident ; but he is neither induced to bestow his confidence, that he may enjoy the pleasure of opening his heart to a friend, nor that he may benefit by his advice, nor because he finds any difficulty in keeping his own secrets.

No one can be more prudent, nor seem less mysterious, nor be more exempt from deceit.

His figure is very fine, and there is great dignity both in his countenance and in his manners.

ners. His imagination is more lively than abounding; he speaks but little, but what he says is always nervous and correct; his satire and his bon mots are generally applauded; but they often embarrass, and are generally a bar to conversation, as they frequently render his hearers discontented with themselves, and induce many rather to shun than to seek his society. Yet his temper is very even and very gentle, and his proceedings always bear the stamp of sincerity and generosity: you may begin by fearing him, but you must conclude by loving him.

The elevation of his sentiments, and the brilliancy of his mind, fully correspond with his uprightness and his probity, independant of every other principle.

Nature made him a great man, and fortune has rendered him an illustrious one.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Chevalier de Vils, by Monsieur du Chatel.

There appeared in the course of the first five-and-thirty years of the eighteenth century, an unknown phenomenon, a novelty in the shape of a man, who was truly unlike every other person, and who will probably never have a fellow upon earth. This extraordinary personage was the Chevalier de Vils.

His character and his figure, at first sight, led you to suppose that he was one of Nature's hastiest sketches; but, upon a more minute inspection, you perceive that she had had it in contemplation to produce a *chef d'œuvre*. He appeared only a rough draft, but it was drawn by a divine and an unerring hand, which Art had not dared to retract; nor dare she, even now, attempt to delineate his character.

All those who knew the Chevalier de Vils used to say—" There never was a more singular character. Was ever man before him so truly natural? his very common sense has a spice of originality? What sort of an education has he received?

received? What are his morals?—No one can tell—he has neither accent nor prejudices."

This sort of astonishment was perfectly well founded; his mind seemed to appropriate every thing which tended to enlighten it; the most vulgar ideas took a new form, when proceeding from his mouth; he seemed to restore to them their primitive gaiety, their grace, and their simplicity: he never seemed to seek the truth; he always seemed inspired by it. Nor had he ever need to have recourse to his memory; he appeared to imagine and to seize, as if by instinct, the sense of every thing. His taste was so correct, so quick-sighted, and so enlightened, that one could hardly believe that in him feeling and discernment were too distinct qualities: his decisions, though made without reflection, and always with precipitation, were so many oracles, freed from the obscurity and jargon of those of the prophetesses of old. His heart, which seemed cast in as singular a mould as his mind, was at once warm and gentle, fond of pleasure, but never obstinate in its pursuits, more alive to desire than to passion; he might feel a degree of repugnance for some people, and some things, but it never degenerated into hatred; he might therefore be said to have a tincture of malice, but no wickedness, and a taste for raillery, but not for satire.

These

These features of his mind gave a great variety to his character; he was very amusing, full of levity, and formed for the world, who hardly knew how to appreciate him, as his presence always inspired both pleasure and fear. He went to court, and frequented the high world, as we should go to a play; the ridicules and follies of the great he found highly diverting, and he made no scruple of laughing at them, even to the face of people, as children at a play burst out into a roar of mirth at any droll scene; and it was suspected that he had a great propensity to hiss many of the actors upon the stage of the world: yet he was by no means an enemy to men; the faults appeared, in his eyes, to be light spots, which he kindly endeavoured to eradicate with a fillip of the tongue; and his *charity*, in this respect, was particularly displayed towards his friends.

He was also, upon no better foundation, suspected of being a libertine, since he was by no means sensual in his pleasures, though very familiar with his passions; he made them his amusement, but did not suffer them to become his masters. The vivacity of his mind, and his very great penetration, enabled him, without study, to dive to the bottom of every thing; the courage and strength of his soul enabled him, without effort, to execute every thing; he gave into

every

every thing, he met every thing, nothing seemed above his comprehension : perhaps therefore the Chevalier de Vils merely required to have attained the maturity of age, to have induced the world, from having regarded him with astonishment, to consider him with admiration.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of Monsieur du Chatel, written by himself.

Monsieur du Chatel is very small and very ugly; though his countenance is not absolutely ignoble, it is very dark: his excessive timidity is concealed under very rude and very inexpressive features; this gives him a sort of savage look, which those who are not acquainted with him mistake for disdain; therefore he has frequently the misfortune to incur the dislike of others, by what ought to render them the more indulgent towards him: one might be tempted to suppose that M. du Chatel is merely one of Nature's sketches, as he is neither indebted to her for his genius, for his ideas, nor for his sentiments, since he was obliged to work very hard for them: his heart and his mind are like strangers, whom he has received into his house, and whom he retains there, in hopes they will place him in the road to perfection. He has learned to think as others do, to play upon different instruments, and to dance; he is therefore solely indebted to art for what he is.

Perhaps,

Perhaps, with the exception of his gentleness, for that he may be indebted to nature, or rather to his being devoid of every tumultuous passion, he cannot arbitrarily declare his will, because he never eagerly desires any thing, consequently he is never irritated to contradict others.

Yet this must not be termed weakness of mind, since no man is more ready to do any thing to oblige another; he is complaisant from principle, and he delights in doing what he deems his duty. He always endeavours so to frame his actions; and he is obstinate in his perseverance in what he deems to be right, though it never leads him to be either warm or hasty. As M. du Chatel has chosen the best models for his example, his sentiments are by no means unworthy of his rank; and his ideas are, in general, reasonable, and not unjust: nothing can induce him to deviate from the rules he has imposed upon himself, because his passions are never at war with his reason, nor do they ever lead him to the performance of any great action; could he have acquired either vanity or ambition, he might have become a great man. He has few vices, and not many great faults; and he may be said to possess, at least, the appearance of many virtues; yet, upon a nearer scrutiny, he seems merely to shine with a borrowed light; it does

not

not originate in himself; he merely reflects the virtues of others.

This renders him an unaccountable being, in the opinion of his friends, as there are no essential features in his character, none likely to assist them to define it; in all he says, and all he does, you perceive a certain want of strength, since he is, in fact, merely the copy of a good original, whose absence you feel very much inclined to regret.

His character may therefore be deemed factitious; he can only be considered as the work of Art, whose *chef d'œuvres* are the mere apish tricks of Dame Nature, since she alone is really great and sublime when she creates; unfortunately, she is inimitable.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Marchioness du Deffand, by M. du Chatel.

Correctness and abundance, precision and elegance, are the rare qualities which characterise the mind of Madame du Deffand; her imagination, though both lively and brilliant, never ascends into the regions of romance, nor never runs into extremes. Truth is her guide, and truth is her sole model. Never to see more than is to be seen, and only to judge from what she sees, is her standing rule, which she did not borrow from Descartes. She is a philosopher, by the grace of Nature, as kings' sons are princes, by the grace of God.

She comprehends everything so easily, that one is inclined to think she merely forms a superficial idea of them. This is a very great mistake, as she examines, compares, and decides, at one and the same moment. Reason, in general so rigid and so scrupulous, has, in her favour, laid aside all her servile prejudices, that she may merely contribute to her amusement and to her pleasure; she may be deemed her humble com-

panion, and her most indulgent friend, since they live together in habits of the greatest familiarity, without constraint, avoiding all discussions, and without pursuing any system; she appreciates things according to their real value, and not according to the general opinion—in short, the mind of Madame du Deffand is a very superior mind.

She is a lover of truth, of excellence, and of simplicity, and the decided enemy to all pretensions of every kind of affectation, of every appearance of constraint and dissimulation, and of a wish to shine, at the expence of nature and of correctness.

Notwithstanding this reunion of distinguished qualities, Madame du Deffand is not exempt from faults. Her sex seems a contradiction to her genius, and one feels half inclined to suspect that Nature has been guilty of an oversight, when she placed, by mistake, a masculine and nervous mind in a weak and feminine body; indeed, I hardly know whether the sight of the most amiable woman in the world is sufficient to console us for the loss of so superior and excellent a man.

The degree of sensibility or feeling attached to her understanding is firm and solid; but that attached to her body is soft and delicate. Notwithstanding the support of her ideas, there is neither

neither vigour nor consistency in her sentiments, because they are seldom adopted by her reason, which is not, properly speaking, the soul of her corporal affections. She is equally susceptible of gaiety and of disgust; she appears prejudiced either for or against every new object which strikes her imagination; but this does not go beyond the outward skin. Her person alone subjects her to these inequalities and to these sort of contradictions, which are very foreign to her mind.

She has her moments of darkness: sometimes the brightness of her understanding is suddenly eclipsed.

She is at times, as it were, fully at a stand; her soul seems to be quite forsaken in her body; it finds itself placed, as it were, in a deserted house, without furniture, and abandoned by its late tenant, where there merely appear phantoms, which terrify it, and fill it with bitterness and grief. She, of course, complains, as she feels herself in a state of misery and discouragement —the more painful, because she still retains the remembrance of the strength and the resources of her mind, which nevertheless she fears she shall never again be able to call into action. Such are the vile tricks which the weakness of her nerves often play her.

Her sentiments do not seem to keep pace with

her feelings, though they have their precipitation and their levity; her heart never loves enough, nor with sufficient vigour, nor with sufficient stability, for her soul to get accustomed to these transient impressions, which are frequently renewed. She is friendly, more from choice than taste; she gives the preference to some, but her mind is seldom in unison with theirs; yet the more or less warmth which may be perceived in her friendship, is merely mechanical: it is by her senses that she is deceived. Nevertheless, Madame du Deffand thinks herself very capable of feeling a real attachment; and this is by no means vain presumption. No one is more worthy of having friends, of acquiring new ones, and of retaining those whom she has once acquired. It is precisely because she is never an enthusiast in friendship, which renders her so with respect to constancy. Her regard is not like those weaknesses of the heart which soon come to a period; it is a continued craving of her soul, which is a proof of its strength, and which requires to be thus exercised, to preserve its life and its activity. Therefore, no one need ever dread being slighted by her, nor that she will ever fail to fulfil her engagements.

Her heart invariably affords you the same dose of esteem and affection, which her reason has once granted you; but you remain fixed in the

same

same place, as it is very seldom you rise in her favour, except she thinks she perceives in you a greater degree of merit than she did at first. But this you have very little reason to hope, as she is very seldom deceived in her first judgment of you.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Marchioness du Deffand, by M. de Forcalquier.

The countenance of the Marchioness du Deffand is very expressive of her vivacity and of her wit; her smile, nay, even her laugh, is particularly agreeable; her eyes are charming—all the movements of her soul are pourtrayed in them; you may read pleasure, ennui, and wit, in their exact proportions; every one might read their sentence in them, and in her countenance, before they heard it, though she seldom keeps them long in suspense, in consequence of her downright sincerity, which is equally a merit and a fault in her.

It is impossible to possess more wit than she does; indeed, it is so very difficult to equal her in this respect, that I should place her above all my acquaintance, if she were not to read this my portrait of her.

Her heart is both feeling and tender; it is now wholly devoted to friendship, which has thriven upon the spoils of love. She is forty years of age.

Under

Under this point of view, we must examine all the qualities of her heart and mind. Her ruling passion is reason; her greatest sin is laziness. She has taken up reason, as some women do devotion. Madame de Flamarens is at the head of this extraordinary sect; at her feet, Madame du Deffand has abjured all the errors of her imagination. Her dislike of unfounded pretensions is so great, that she would sooner forgive you any other fault. She would prefer the most narrow mind, if devoid of that error, in preference to those dazzling, but ridiculous, meteors, which often blind men of wit. No one is either so severe or so indulgent as she is: the most trifling error meets with the most rigorous treatment from her understanding; but the slightest degree of elegance meets with favour from her imagination, which is the amiable and complaisant friend of her heart, who seizes her preferences in their birth, that she may embellish and flatter them, and thus withdraw them from the severity of her judgments. The errors into which it sometimes leads her perhaps encreases the merit, or, at all events, the delight of her friends.

By an upright and well-regulated mind, by her intimate acquaintance with the solid pleasures of friendship, by the tranquillity of her soul, by her wise economy, which has enabled

her to retrench all those useless superfluities the offspring of pride, she has been able to separate happiness from fortune, and to fix her's upon the most solid basis.

She did not merely content herself with being virtuous—her heart made its own election of its virtues: candour, simplicity, fidelity, moderation, and dignity of mind and sentiment, are all her own; and an upright mind and an excellent understanding, will always give them the preference, before the dazzling allurements which attend the more ostentatious virtues.

We must now speak of the errors of Madame du Deffand. She is too free and too frank, when passing judgment, upon either men or their works; she has perhaps a too scrupulous regard for truth, if that is possible, as it prevents her from ever being lavish of those praises which may be compared to French plate, but with which men are easily satisfied, and which it is policy to grant them: her reason is so correct and so inimical to every sort of illusion, that she appreciates the sentiments of others below their real standard: she is too vehement in argument, to the great discredit of the reasons she alledges, and too inflexible in her decisions. I would cite any others, if I thought she had any more; and if she had them, I must know it; she would have displayed them to me. And I must say, that those

those specks in her character, to which I have alluded, are the offspring of her virtues: her faults may therefore be said to belong to the age she lives in, and not to her.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Marchioness du Deffand, by the President Henault.

Madame du Deffand resided at Sceaux, where she generally spent nearly all the year; she did not leave that place till after the death of the Duke and Duchess du Maine. The winter she spent in a small house in the Rue de Beaune, where she saw very little company. As soon as she became absolutely her own mistress, she greatly increased the number of her acquaintances; and as the more she was known, the more her society was relished, her house was soon not large enough to receive her numerous visitors, as she had a supper-party every evening: this induced her to take up her abode in the convent of St. Joseph. Her fortune was greatly increased by the death of her husband: during the latter part of her life, she was in the receipt of about 20,000 livres a-year. No woman ever had so many friends, nor none were ever more deserving of them. Friendship might be said to be her ruling passion, which induced me to forgive her being rather fastidious

 in

in her notions of it, since, even when in rather confined circumstances, she was always surrounded by friends; but after her removal to St. Joseph, she was always surrounded by the best company in Paris, who all paid due homage to her wit and knowledge. She had an excellent, an upright, and a generous heart, which induced her always to render herself useful to others, and frequently to imagine the means of being so—how many people, nay, even of the first consideration, could subscribe to the truth of this article!—a correct understanding, an agreeable imagination, and a gaiety, which induced you to forget her age, (I speak of her latter years, as she had been extremely handsome); a well stored mind, of which she never made a boast, even at an age when she merely thought of diverting herself. It is very much to be wished that her letters and other writings may not be lost to the world, since, in that case, Madame de Sevigné will not be deemed the only good model for the epistolary style. Yet who would believe it? I am describing a person who was blind! This misfortune made no alteration, either in her temper or her conversation; it might be said, that sight was to her a superfluity; she seemed to read what the countenance expressed, by the inflexions of the voice; and she was always as *apropos* in her repartees, as if she had had the finest eyes. But as I do not wish

to

to appear prejudiced in her favour, and feel anxious to declare the truth, I must acknowledge, that though age did not deprive her of her talents, it rendered her jealous and mistrustful, and very awkward in her management of her friends, whom she might have easily modelled to her mind; but her temper became unequal, unjust, though she merely appeared to disadvantage in the eyes of those it was the most to her interest to please; and, to conclude, let me acknowledge, that she was the person who has rendered me the most happy and the most miserable, because she is the person whom I the most loved.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of Madame de Staal, written by herself.

Madame de Staal is of the middling size, tolerably well made, very thin, very withered, and very disagreeable. Her character and her mind greatly resemble her figure: there is nothing absolutely awry in either, nor anything to admire. Her misfortunes have greatly contributed to bring her forward; as it is generally supposed that people who can neither boast of birth or fortune can never have received a good education, they give them due credit for what talents they may have inherited from nature.

But she had the very good fortune to receive a most excellent education, from whence she has derived the little worth she has to boast, such as very rigid principles of virtue, very elevated sentiments, and a great regularity of conduct, which habit has rendered almost second nature. Her greatest ambition was to be reckoned very reasonable; and as women who feel

feel themselves very much tightened in their stays, fancy they have a very fine shape, so because her reason was often at variance with her will, she fancied she had a superabundance. Yet she has never been able to curb the vivacity of her temper, nor even to give it an appearance of equality, which has often rendered her very disagreeable to her masters, very troublesome in society, and perfectly unbearable to those beneath her: happily, her want of fortune has prevented her from having any dependants or hangers-on.

With all these faults, she has acquired a certain degree of reputation, for which she is indebted to two very fortuitous circumstances: owing to the one, the public were enabled to judge of her wit and understanding; and the other enabled her to display a certain degree of firmness, and a discretion which was proof against everything. These events having been very generally known, she was brought into notice, in spite of the obscurity of her birth and of her situation in life; and she thus acquired a degree of consideration, much above what her rank in life had taught her to expect. She has endeavoured to keep her vanity, in consequence, within bounds; but the very satisfaction which she feels, while fancy-

ing

ing that she is by no means vain, is a certain proof that she is very much so of her forbearance.

She has devoted many hours in each day to a serious course of reading, more with a view to strengthen her reason, than to ornament her mind, which is, with her, a very secondary object. She seldom forms any decided opinion; therefore, she seldom disputes, except she is out of temper. Yet, from all her study, she has merely learnt enough to enable her to understand what may be said respecting any subject, and not to introduce anything of her own very *mal-apropos.* She has endeavoured to make herself thoroughly acquainted with her duties, and to fulfil them after, at the expence of her inclination; and feels authorized, in consequence of having met with so little complaisance, to display none towards anybody; thus giving full scope to her natural inflexibility, which her situation in life may have rather bent, but which has never been thoroughly broken.

The love of liberty is her ruling passion, which is peculiarly unfortunate, as her whole life has been spent in the service of others. She has therefore had some difficulty to conform

form to necessity, and to her destiny, in spite of the few flowers which may have been strewed in her path.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Duchess de St. Pierre, by the President Henault.

The Duchess de St. Pierre is no longer young; but nature, as if anxious to preserve one of her *chef d'œuvres*, has enabled her to preserve her beauty, in all its pristine perfection. Her's was not the beauty of a flower, which glows on one day in the sun, and is faded and withered the next, since, when people remark that she is handsome, it is never with a reference to the past: every thing about her bears the stamp of true dignity, her countenance, her inclinations, the sound of her voice, the style of her letters, her discourse, and her politeness; her expressions are all chosen, though they are never affected, and her conversation is agreeable and interesting: she never forgets any thing, and she has seen a great deal: she regulates the length of her relations, upon the degree of pleasure they seem to afford her audience; though she never omits any essential circumstance, every one regrets their brevity. If all books were as

well written as she speaks, everybody would make a virtue of being fond of reading. No one displays a more admirable discernment in the choice of her friends; and her friendship is very courageous, and very impregnable; but, as even our greatest virtues are often allied to our defects, the extreme sensibility of her heart sometimes prevents her from seeing things in their true light; and her delicacy is so great, that by not rendering to others the justice which is their due, she does not render it to herself. Totally free from presumption, she leaves to others the task of appreciating and of judging of her worth; her manner of listening, is extremely flattering to those who are speakers, as they are convinced that what they say is not lost upon her: no person can be more polite nor more attentive; would to God that her example were to be followed by the rising generations! She is formed to be their model, owing to the gentleness of her character, which is calculated to inspire them with confidence. She is, in short, born to shine in the high world, and the only one who still gives us any idea of what we hear said respecting the real urbanity of courtly manners.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Count d'Ussé, by the President Henault.

There is no more ostentation in the heart than in the mind of M. d'Ussé; he contents himself with loving as he contents himself with thinking; it belongs to others to favour him either with their gratitude or their approbation; but they must seek him out, and appreciate his sentiments as well as his talents.

He is the most absent man living; the letters which he writes are as full of interlineations as his conversation is of parenthesis; he is a proof that clear ideas do not always produce a clear style; but when he is himself, you may discover a degree of depth in his ideas, an extent and variety in his reflections, and a correctness of reasoning, which enables him to form the most accurate judgments respecting every matter which he examines: to these rare qualities of the mind, he adds the most gentle and amiable disposition, which nature has taken care to animate, by giving him a singular taste for disputing upon most points.

He may be said to possess something better than modesty, which is simplicity; modesty, however estimable it may be, is sometimes carried too far; it is not always a proof that we do not esteem ourselves more than we ought, and it often induces us to hold ourselves too cheap. Simplicity, on the contrary, enables us to see ourselves as we really are, and to judge of ourselves as we should judge of others; it may be said to be the proof of more correctness in the mind, and of our having less pretensions.

A friend of society, and to the public, the good qualities of M. d'Ussé are a sort of foundation, from which every one may draw; they are like a pure and clear stream, which seems to run for the use of his fellow-citizens. His philosophy is by no means savage, because in him it does not proceed from his being exempt from the passions or feelings of humanity; but he has felt the inconveniences of them, though they merely conspired to render him more indulgent towards those of others.

Full of courage, and possessing all the necessary talents to render him a very able warrior, he has, if I may so express myself, taken Fortune by storm; but it was only for a moment, as she soon convinced him that she was a true courtier, and that she was not in the habit of remaining, for any length of time, in the company of

virtue. All the world like M. d'Ussé, some from inclination, others because it is the fashion. Happy he who is virtuous enough to love him, from having a fellow-feeling of his merits.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Marchioness de Flamarens, written by the President Henault.

Madame de Flamarens has the most engaging, the most modest, and the finest countenance that ever was seen; her's is a very peculiar style of beauty, which nature never seized before nor since; there is a something so uncommon and so mysterious in her features, that, in fabulous times, it would have been said, that an immortal had not sufficiently concealed her divine origin, when she assumed so captivating a form. I shall not dwell upon the impression her beauty is sure to make, nor upon the quiet but constant resistance with which her heart opposes the admission of an improper sentiment or feeling; the public has done her ample justice in both respects: I shall merely endeavour to describe her, as well as it is possible to describe such a mind as her's. Every thing that she approaches, every place which she inhabits, seem to derive a degree of purity from the chastity of her conduct; her virtue has nothing savage about it;

it; her gentleness induces people to forgive her morality; and the principle from whence it arises prevents it from lowering that of others: one thinks it proceeds from a regular system of conduct, founded upon sound and real philosophy, which has taught her to avoid splitting upon those rocks, the passions; and as this same morality is certainly the offspring of reason and wisdom, it is much less humiliating to others, than if it appeared dressed in the dazzling robes of virtue: indeed, she has always particularly endeavoured to avoid being even mentioned, with the praise so much her due. Her modesty, which is engrafted in her character, has increased by reflection; this minor virtue seems to apologize to other women, for her great superiority over them, and it is sure to be well received—envy is seldom disarmed by mere force; it is much wiser to cheat her into laying down her arms; and in this modesty generally succeeds. This ingenuous, though simple virtue, affords others time to appreciate our good qualities, before they begin to mistrust them; and its empire is, at last, fully established, before any one has had time to put themselves upon their guard: but for this precious quality to have its full effect, it must be wholly devoid of pretension; to prove which, nothing can be more favourable than the timidity of Madame de

Flamarens, as it is a convincing proof that her modesty is natural to her character; and that, if it was a failing, she could with difficulty avoid falling into it.

Not that I would wish it to be believed that she is indebted to her modesty alone, for other women's feeling inclined to forgive her, for possessing the invaluable talent of pleasing every body, and being generally admired; the certainty they feel that she will never make use of these rare gifts to their detriment, greatly contributes to render them very indulgent towards her.

You are often astonished by the flashes of her wit, and by the unexpected display of the superiority of her mind. There are moments when she seems, in a manner, alone in the middle of the great world; indeed, at times, she has the air and appearance of a stranger there. But, to continue to speak figuratively, as soon as she meets with anybody who speaks her language, she seems to recover her spirits, her vivacity returns, and she makes herself amends for the ennui she endured, while in a comparative state of solitude, amongst those for whom she merely felt a sentiment of indifference, as she is very fond of conversing with those who understand her, but not from any wish she feels to display her superiority. The timidity of her character

is

is never more visible than when she is speaking; though it does not deduct any thing from the purity of her ideas, nor from the strength of her judgment, nor from the solidity of her decisions.

Her taste may be depended upon ; but those who are merely superficially acquainted with her, think it is more founded upon the correctness of her mind, than upon its sensibility, as she seems rather to perceive than to feel, and never gives herself up to that enthusiasm of the moment, which is very desirable in mere matters of taste, though, perhaps, it is not always very justifiable. But, to speak plainer, and perhaps I shall also be speaking the opinion of others, she is not sufficiently seduced by the things which really please her ; she preserves too great a degree of *sang froid,* not to immediately perceive the slightest spot in her mind; and this severity, with respect to herself, may be a great drawback to her pleasures. More lively feelings may lead people into errors and illusions, but they are not without their concomitant charms, and perhaps they add more to peoples happiness. She is equally correct in all her judgments, and this has not a little influence upon her mode of life. Her sincerity is almost proverbial ; she never praises any thing that does not really meet her approbation, nor does she ever express

a sentiment

a sentiment which she does not feel : yet, as no one is better acquainted with the rules of society, her wit sometimes comes to the assistance of the rigidity of her principles ; and it often brings her off triumphant, at the moment when she must either have betrayed the truth, or have offended the person who had required her opinion.

But as every one possesses a more or less degree of sensibility, she has bestowed the share she received from nature upon her friends, because she never had any lovers ; and, what is very strange, reasonable as she is in every other respect, no one is sooner affected by a brilliant exterior ; she leaves to time to discover whether the mind is equal to the casket in which it is contained ; but, as her feelings seem to partake of the correctness of her character, she is very rarely mistaken in the choice of her friends—if they have once pleased her, they almost always continue to do so, as they generally improve upon acquaintance. Friendship may therefore be styled her ruling passion, and we must all be governed by its influence ; and, when once she has given herself up to her feelings, in this respect, it might be supposed that her character had undergone a total change : she seems to possess that prodigal sort of gaiety which has no

reserves,

reserves, and which would be so very dangerous, were her ruling passion love ; and that impetuous enthusiasm, so foreign to her general character, no longer seems to alarm her reason—she seems to think she cannot pay too dearly for the pleasure she feels in daring to love any thing, or any person : but all her sentiments, as well as all her feelings, bear the stamp of her virtues ; they seem to animate her morality, without endangering it.

This character will be deemed fictitious, I make no doubt. What! has she no faults? Let us see whether we cannot find some features in her mind, which may be liable to criticism.

Sincere as Madame de Flamarens is generally acknowledged to be, it may be objected that she is rather too reserved, and that she merely says what she pleases. To this I must agree ; but is it a fault ?—is it not, on the contrary, a virtue, called prudence ?—To this my readers must also agree : but they may think that this said prudence is a sort of restraint upon her conversation, which robs it of many of its charms. One cannot sufficiently read what passes in her heart; it may be said, nothing seems to escape her—she has no last words—friendship has no reserves—it must speak all it thinks—and this Madame de Flamarens never does. To this I might reply, that

that it argues no small degree of presumption to make her these reproaches, since, to know whether it is founded, we must know to what degree she loves those who think themselves entitled to complain of her.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

*Of the Marquis de Gontault, by the Marchioness de G***.*

Damon might be said to be witty, if his ideas ever produced thoughts; but, as it is, he has only the appearance of being so, since he is by no means aware of the judgments he pronounces; and he might be deemed a philosopher, if he was really as well acquainted with men as he supposes himself to be.

Damon has a compassionate and a generous heart, yet Damon has no feeling: Damon is affected by pity or by gratitude, but never by love; because Damon has only a good, but not a tender heart: he is never indifferent to merit, to misfortunes, or in return for any favours done him; but he is not susceptible of the more tender passions. Yet, in general, he likes, and seems to regard his friends; but he cannot love them.

Damon's heart being of such a quiet texture, his temper may be supposed to partake of its equanimity, and he certainly is very gay; not because

because his mind is much attuned to pleasantry, or that his humour is naturally lively, but because he is never strongly affected by any thing: he is very courageous, and he is always in full possession of his reason: he never seeks to please, but he is very careful not to displease: politeness is as natural to him as his mind, his character, and his humour; none of which he has ever sought to correct, to render perfect, or even to adorn: he is wholly devoid of mistrust, because he never thinks about it, since no one can be less proud of their merit: he disdains even to display his wit.

He is very reasonable, and has a degree of philosophy in his composition, which seems very foreign to his mind; but it gives him the necessary courage to rise superior to every event; and, in spite of his ambition, it will teach him to console himself under the disappointment of his expectations, and to be happy, even though they should not be realized.

Dissipation he requires, but he is by no means a slave to pleasure; he must be in motion, to be agreeably occupied; when he remains quiet, he becomes the prey of ennui.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

*Of the Duchess de la Valliere, by the Marchioness de G***.*

She is a beautiful and amiable woman, a coquette without coquetry, virtuous without being absolutely chaste, her simplicity is dignified, her temper particularly gentle, her goodness renders her polite, nor can any failing be discovered either in her mind or disposition; therefore she would be a model of perfection, if she was as much the enemy to vice, as she appears to be the friend of virtue.

She pleases every body, and she is pleased with every one; you love her, not because she knows how to flatter or to amuse you, but because her manners are peculiarly fascinating; your self-love never interferes with your opinion of her, because you perceive that she never strives to render herself amiable upon your account; yet she strikes you as being such, because she really is so, and that because she follows the natural bent of her disposition.

Nevertheless, however amiable or charming she

she may appear, she can never do more than please; she cannot inspire any one with either tenderness or love, because it does not appear that she even knows how to love; she feels an inclination and a preference for some more than others, for which she always alledges very good reasons; her heart never decides for her, that never takes any part in her concerns, nor is it ever called into action, even by her lovers; she takes them because they suit her, she retains them without becoming attached to them, and she loses them without regret. It is a lover that she likes, and not the person of this said lover; therefore, when they abandon her, she is hardly aware of having lost any thing, they are so soon re-implaced by others; yet her very indifference would suffice to render her constant, were it possible to be so with men.

In point of disposition, she is very reasonable; she has her full share of good sense, and is a very good judge of most things; she perfectly understands what she sees, and what is shewn her; but her mind, like a barren soil, is incapable of producing any thing; yet she would not want for wit, if she possessed either imagination or feeling.

But though she is never strongly affected by any thing, her indifference does not render her cold; she feels interested in all she sees and in

all

all she thinks: she is fond of pleasure as an amusement, but it is not absolutely necessary to her happiness; serious occupations would suit her quite as well, and perhaps better, since her mind is given to reflection: she is prudent, without being reserved; she thinks a great deal, sees every thing in a proper light, and reasons very justly; and would probably conduct herself very properly, if chance, the weakness of her disposition or habit, did not lead her astray.

Her countenance resembles her character; it is agreeable and dignified; her eyes are very fine, but wholly devoid of expression.

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Duchess de Mirepoix, by the President de Montesquieu.

La beauté que je chante ignore ses appas,
Mortels qui la voyez, dites-lui qu'elle est belle,
Naïve, simple, naturelle,
Et timide sans embarras.
Telle est la Jacinthe nouvelle,
Sa tête ne s'élève pas
Sur les fleurs qui sont autour d'elle;
Sans se montrer, sans se cacher,
Elle se plaît dans la prairie,
Elle y pourrait finir sa vie
Si l'œil ne venait la chercher.
Mirepoix reçut en partage
La candeur, la douceur, la paix,
Et ce sont parmi tant d'attraits
Ceux dont elle sait faire usage.
Le fier dedain n'osa jamais
Pour tenter de gâter ses traits,
Se faire voir sur son visage.
Son esprit a cette chaleur
Du soleil qui commence à naître,
L'hymen peut parler de son cœur,
L'amour pourrait le meconnaître.

PORTRAIT,

PORTRAIT, OR CHARACTER,

Of the Duchess de Mirepoix, by the Marchioness du Deffand.

Madame de Mirepoix is so modest, her self-love is so little perceived, she seems so little occupied with herself, that it is rather a difficult task to delineate her character.

It is vanity in general which discloses our real disposition; men or women, by wishing to appropriate to themselves qualities which they do not possess, almost always discover those faults which they are the most anxious to conceal.

We are deprived of this resource in Madame de Mirepoix; she never speaks of herself, never takes upon herself to decide upon any thing, very seldom disputes with any body—it is sufficient to see her, to think her amiable and interesting; but one must have lived with her, to be able to appreciate her worth. Particular circumstances must occur, to induce her to display her wit, her judgment, and her taste; the noble simplicity which is the foundation of her character, banishes from her mind all ostentation,

 and

and every degree of pretension, and keeps her, for a time, in a manner, concealed.

She is very timid, but never seems embarrassed—never loses her presence of mind, nor what we style *l'apropos*. Her countenance is charming, her complexion is dazzling; her features, without being absolutely regular, are so well suited to each other, that no one has a greater air of youth, nor can be prettier.

Her desire to please bears a much greater resemblance to politeness than to coquetry; therefore the women are not jealous of her, and the men dare not fall in love with her; her carriage is so decent, and there seems something so gentle and so well-regulated in her whole person, that she inspires every one with respect, and depresses the hopes of the most audacious, far more effectually than were she to assume a grave and severe countenance.

Her conversation is easy and natural; she never seeks to shine; she lets others seize every advantage, as she never puts herself forward, never displays any disdain, much less any degree of vehemence, though she is very far removed from being cold; but her manners and her expressions fully display the correctness of her mind and the dignity of her sentiments.

She is so gentle, so easy, and so complaisant in society, that one might suspect she had nei-

 ther

ther preference nor inclinations, and that she adopted those of others. No one, to see her, would suppose that she had very lively passions; yet this very gentleness and easiness, bordering on indifference, is a sure proof that she is capable of feeling the most tender attachment. It is because Madame de Mirepoix is so fully occupied with him she loves, that she appears so indifferent to every thing that does not immediately concern him. The love which she feels for her husband satisfies her heart, displays itself in her countenance, and communicates to all her actions a degree of serenity, of life, of tranquillity, and of warmth, which renders her particularly amiable, and generally distinguished. To this add all the qualities and all the virtues, in the exact degree where the amiable begins, and you may have an idea of this lady.

END OF THE PORTRAITS, OR CHARACTERS.

LETTERS

FROM

*M. DE VOLTAIRE**,

TO THE

MARCHIONESS DU DEFFAND.

1732.

You had proposed to me, Madam, to purchase the place of equerry, in the suite of the Duchess du Maine, but not feeling disposed to undertake

* *Note of the French Editor.*—The reader may have been surprised in not having seen in the preceding Correspondence, but one letter from M. de Voltaire, page 88, in the first volume. But there were so many of his letters to Madame du Deffand, that had they been inserted according to their dates, they would have broke in upon the arrangement, because none of these have been found to which his are in answer.

The Editor, therefore, thought it best to form a separate collection of all that the man the most celebrated of his age, had written to the woman the most likely to appreciate his very rare talents.

such an employment, I have been obliged to wait for some other opportunity to pay my court to you. I am assured, that besides this place of equerry, that of reader is also vacant; as I am convinced that this is not a sinecure, at the Duchess du Maine's, as it is in the King's household, I would very willingly accept the situation myself, if I had not fixed my eyes upon a person, who having more wit, a much greater degree of youth, and better lungs, will acquit himself much better than I should be able to do.

I have now, Madam, afforded you an opportunity of displaying the goodness of your heart, and the extent of your credit. The person to whom I allude is the Abbé de Linant, a very young man, who possesses every requisite to render him generally courted, but money. He has a very powerful recommendation to your favour; he is the friend of M. de Formont, who will, I am sure, be answerable for the purity of his morals, and for the superiority of his talents. I am merely, in this instance, the precursor of M. de Formont, who will, I am sure, request you will interest yourself in his behalf; and I shall be as much obliged to you for so doing, as if I was the only person to whom you had done the favour. Upon my word, if you do place this young man in the road to fortune, you will do a most generous action; you will

encourage

encourage him to cultivate a most decided talent for poetry; you will attach to you for life a most amiable youth, who will feel that to you he will be indebted for his future success; you will enjoy the satisfaction of having rescued a person of real merit from a state of the greatest poverty, and of having placed him in the best school in the world. Therefore, in the name of God, endeavour to succeed in this business, for your own satisfaction, for your honour, for that of Madame du Maine, and for the love of our friend Formont, who will second my intreaties with all the force of his eloquence.

Adieu, Madam; I am as much attached to you as the Abbé de Linant soon will be; and subscribe myself your most respectful and most devoted, &c. &c. &c.

Basle, 23d May, 1734.

Truly, Madam, when I did myself the honour to write to you, and to request you would engage your friends to speak to M. de Maurepas, it was not because I was afraid he would do me any harm, but that he might do me some good. I prayed to him as to my good genius; but my bad genius is, unfortunately, much more powerful than him. Do not you admire, Madam, all the

the fine speeches which are made respecting these *scandalous* letters? Is the Duchess du Maine very angry, because I have ranked Newton above Descartes? and how will the Duchess de Villars, who is so fond of innate ideas, forgive my boldness, since I have ventured to affirm that the said innate ideas are mere chimeras?

But if you are in need of amusement, mention this *inflammatory* book to some Jansenistes. Had I declared that I did not believe in God, these worthy men would have had great hopes of my conversion; but, since I have ventured to affirm that Pascal has sometimes been mistaken; that *fatal laurel, beautiful star,* and *wonder of our days,* are not poetical beauties, as Pascal believed; that it has not been absolutely proved, that we must put our faith in religion, because of its obscurity; that we must not stake the existence of God at cross and pile; in short, since I have written these *impious absurdities,* there is not an honest Janseniste who does not wish to burn me, both in this world and the next.

To tell you, Madam, which are the most insane, the Jansenistes or the Molinists, the Anglicans or the Quakers, would be rather difficult; but it is very certain that I am a greater fool than any of them, for having ventured to tell them truths which will do them no good, and which will do me a great deal of harm. I was

in

in London when I wrote all this, and those English who saw my manuscript thought me very moderate. I expected to have left France for good, when I so unfortunately, about two years ago, gave Thiriot leave to print these trifles. I have, more's the pity, changed my mind since then; and, as if purposely to spite me, these letters have appeared in France, at the very time that I was more anxious than ever to remain there.

Should I never return thither, be assured that you will be at the head of those whom I shall regret. If you see the President Henault, request him to speak in my behalf very often to M. Rouillé; admitting this proves of no avail, your approbation and his will suffice to console me for the fury of the devotees, and their letters de cachet. If you will still honour me with your notice, write to me at Paris, opposite St. Gervais; the letters will reach me. Be so obliging as to affix a little mark, such as two o o's, for example. I ought not to mistake your style, but sometimes one does make qui-pro-quos.

1735.

I HAVE just received a most charming letter, Madam; but how should it be otherwise, when written

written by you and M. de Formont? A letter from you is a favour, which I do not require to be deprived of for any length of time, to be sensible of its full value. But verses! and such verses! would suffice to turn my brain, admitting your prose never to have taken such an effect.

De qui sont-ils ces vers heureux,
Légers, faciles, gracieux?
Ils ont comme vous l'art de plaire.
Du Deffand vous êtes la mère
De ces enfans ingénieux.
Formont, cet autre paresseux,
En est-il avec vous le père?
Ils sont bien dignes de tous deux,
Mais je ne les méritais guère.

But I am as much delighted with them, as if I did deserve them. I can only regret I am seldom so fortunate, above once a-year at most.

Ah! ce que vous faites si bien,
Pourquoi si rarement le faire?
Si tel est votre caractère,
Je plains celui qu'un doux lien
Soumet à votre humeur sévère.

I agree that there are people who are very lazy friends, but very active when in love; and I also agree, that a favour from you is far more precious,

precious, than the most flattering compliments from any other. Your seducing letter has afforded me a convincing proof of this, and that is precisely why I should like to receive just such a one every day.

I feel satisfied with having scribbled such a quantity of prose and verse, since my productions have sometimes the honour of affording you an hour's amusement. My poor Quakers are much obliged to you for loving them; they are much more proud of your approbation, than grieved at having been burnt. To have pleased you, affords an excellent ointment for burns. I perceive that *God* has touched your heart, and that you are in the right road to heaven, since you acknowledge your regard for my good Quakers.

Ils ont le ton bien familier,
Mais c'est celui de l'innocence.
Un Quaker dit tout ce qu'il pense.
Il faut, s'il vous plait, essuyer
Sa naïve et rude eloquence;
Car en voulant vous avouer
Que sur son cœur simple et grossier
Vous avez entière puissance,
Il est homme á vous tutoyer,
En dépit de la bienséance.
Heureux le mortel enchanté
Qui dans vos bras, belle Délie
Dans ces momens ou l'on s'oublie,

Peut

Peut prendre cette liberté,
Sans choquer la civilité,
De notre nation polie!

Some respectable but affected prudes might, perhaps, feel scandalized by these last verses; but as you, Madam, are highly respectable, and neither affected nor a prude, you will forgive my muse.

Cirey, 18th March, 1736.

A VERY tedious illness, Madam, has prevented me from sooner answering the charming letter which you honoured me with. You ought to feel interested in my confinement, as it was occasioned by my having stuck too close to my pen. And why am I so indefatigable, pray? because I am very anxious to amuse you, and to deserve your approbation. The praise you have bestowed upon my Americans, particularly upon the virtue of the simple but tender Alzira, fully consoles me for all the criticisms which have been lavished upon me in the *little town*, which is about four leagues from Paris, and about five hundred leagues distant from real taste, and which is named the Court. I will certainly do what I can to render Guzman more bearable. I shall

shall not attempt to say any thing in his defence, since he has had the misfortune to fall under your displeasure; but is not Grandval also rather in fault? did not he *out-herod* the part? did not he render ferocious, what I only meant should be severe?

You expected, you say, from the very first lines, that Guzman would condemn his father to be hanged. Now, my dear Madam, the very first sentence he utters runs thus:—

Quand vous priez un fils, Seigneur, vous commandez.

And has not he a precedent for his authority, in that of all the preceding viceroys of Peru? and may not his inflexibility be made to agree with his feelings as a son? Sylla and Marius loved their fathers.

The plot, in short, is founded upon the alteration which takes place in his disposition. Had he appeared gentle, tender, and compassionate, in the first act, what could I have done with him in the last?

Suffer me to speak to you more positively respecting Pope. You say, that according to his ideas, social love proves, that "whatever is, is right." First of all, it is not what he very improperly calls social love, which he brings forward as the groundwork, and the proof of the

order

order that reigns in the universe. "Whatever is, is right," because a supreme and infinite wise Being chose it should be so; such is the subject of his first epistle. He then, in his last epistle, styles social love that beneficent providence, which has ordained that every animal should serve to the subsistence of another. My Lord Shaftesbury, who first endeavoured to establish this system, averred, and with truth, that God had bestowed a love of self upon man, to engage him to preserve his existence; and that social love, or rather an instinct very subordinate to the love of self, when combined with the other, forms the groundwork of society.

But it is very strange to impute to I hardly know what sort of social love in God, that irresistible fury which inclines so many species of animals to devour each other. There certainly seems a design, or a sort of vague instinct in it, I agree; but it is not an instinct that can be styled love. Pope's whole work abounds in these obscurities; there are a hundred admirable flashes, which, like lightning, frequently pierce through the darkness, and they must be very analogous to your brilliant imagination, since the sublime and beautiful is your element. Never be afraid of appearing a pedant; never blush to add to the graces of your person the strength of your mind; make use of your knotting bag when

when in company with other women, but talk reason with me.

May I request, Madam, that you would recall me to the remembrance of the President Henault: his is the most ingenious and the most amiable species of wit I ever met with. A thousand kind wishes attend you, and will do while I breathe.

10th September, 1749.

I HAVE just been present at the death of a friend* of twenty years standing, who sincerely loved you, Madam, and who told me, only two days before she died, she rejoiced to think that she should so soon see you. I had requested the President Henault to inform you that she had been very safely delivered, and was, in the usual terms, as well as could be expected; indeed, I had entered into many details, in my letter to him, purposely to oblige you. Madame du Chatelet had desired me to let you know that she was in bed, and I thought I had fulfilled my duty, by writing to the President Henault, your second self. The unfortunate little girl of whom she had lain in, and who has cost her her life, did

* The Marchioness du Chatelet.

 not

not sufficiently interest me. Alas! Madam, I had ventured to joke upon the subject, and had even written, by her desire, in the same tone of pleasantry, to her friends. If any thing could increase my affliction, at such a dreadful moment, it would be my having so lightly treated so dreadful an event, and which has rendered me the veriest wretch that ever crawled the earth. I did not write to you while my spirits were above par: I waited, it seems, to announce to you her demise. It is from the sensibility of your heart, that I hope to derive consolation, under such afflicting circumstances. They are preparing to drag me to Cirey, with M. du Chatelet. From thence, I shall return to Paris, without knowing what will become of me; my only hope is, that I shall soon follow her. Suffer me, upon my arrival, to enjoy the afflicting consolation of dwelling upon her rare qualities to you, and to lament, at your feet, a woman, who, in spite of her weaknesses, had a very superior mind.

Potzdam, the last of May, 1751.

I SHOULD suppose, Madam, that my comrade Amon serves his king as expeditiously as he is dilatory in his delivery of private letters. I should have been very willing to have undertaken

taken the journey he mentions this June; and really, Madam, to see you would have been my principal motive. I might have seized the opportunity of the King, my new master, paying a visit to that part of the world, which was formerly inhabited by the Princess of Cleves; but he does not mean to make any stay there, and I have promised to remain with him till September. One must keep one's word with kings, particularly with this one; besides, he inspires me with such an inclination for work, that if I had not already learnt to occupy myself, I should have learnt it of him; I never saw a man so laborious. I should blush to be idle, when I daily see a King, who, during the morning, governs and regulates four hundred leagues of country, and who, during the afternoon, cultivates his taste for literature. This is the way to avoid that ennui of which you complain: but, to do this, you must possess as great a rage for study as he does, or me, the most insignificant of his servants.

When we receive any new books from Paris, full of wit, which we do not understand, and bristling with old maxims new modelled, and finely decked out with new tinsel, do you know, Madam, what we do? We do not read them. All the good books, of the last age, are in the royal library, and they are all-sufficient; we read

them again and again, to preserve us from contagion.

You mention two editions of my follies: it is very certain, that the one which contains the least is the best; I have, as yet, neither seen the one or the other. I condemn them both, as I think that as it is not right to publish all that kings have done, but only their most memorable actions, it is neither right to publish all that poor authors have written, but only what may, by impartial judges, be deemed worthy to be transmitted to posterity.

I am told that the Paris edition is infinitely superior to the one published at Rouen, and that it is much more correct: I would do myself the honour of presenting it to you, were I at Paris. They wish me to publish one here, after my own fancy; but I do not know how to begin. I should like to throw half what I have written into the fire, and to abridge and correct the other half. Yet, notwithstanding this fine display of penitence, I come to no resolution; I only continue to arrange the Age of Louis the Fourteenth. I have brought all my materials with me; they may be deemed gold and jewels; but I am afraid I shall handle them with a very heavy hand.

That age was really worthy of being handed down to posterity; it has taught the present to think:

think: but let us take care the disciples do not fall very much below their masters: I endeavour, at least, to express myself naturally; and I hope that when I revisit Paris, I shall no longer be understood. Has the President Henault, to whom I have always sent very obliging messages, through your means, quite forgot me? saints should not thus disdain their devotees. I am the more entitled to his notice, as he is of the Age of Louis the Fourteenth.

You continue then, Madam, to go to Sceaux? I have taken the liberty to send a letter to Amon, for the Duchess du Maine; he will deliver it at the end of a few years. You have lost two friends at that court, very much unlike each other—Madame de Staal and Madame de Malauze.

Take great care of yourself; do not eat too much: I predicted, when you were so ill, that you would live a long while. Above all, do not take a disgust to life; for, upon my word, after one has deeply reflected, we cannot discover that there is any thing better: I shall retain, during mine, the regard I have always professed for you, and I shall always love Paris, because of you, and the small number of the elect.

Potzdam,

Potzdam, 20th July, 1751.

The remembrance of you, and of your goodness towards me, Madam, often induces me to repine at my destiny : I am like those enchanted knights, who were reminded of their country when detained in the Palace of Alcine. I can assure you, that if everybody in Paris thought as you do, I should not so easily have suffered myself to be removed from thence. But, Madam, when one has the misfortune to be a public character, in the sense of the word that I was, do you know what one must do ?—Why, run away. Fortunately, I have chosen a very agreeable asylum : my eel pie is certainly not so exquisite as your ragouts, but it is, nevertheless, very good. I lead a very quiet, a very retired, and a life of perfect freedom, which certainly greatly contributes to the preservation of my health. Besides, only conceive how pleasant it is to feel oneself at liberty, under the roof of a king, to be able to think, to write, and to say, what one chuses. To be obliged to place a padlock upon the heart, has always appeared to me a refinement upon torture. Do you know, that you were slaves at Sceaux and at Anet ?—Yes, slaves, when compared to the real liberty one enjoys at Potzdam, under the protection of a king who has won five battles ; and more than

that,

that, we eat strawberries, peaches, grapes, and pine apples, in the month of January. As for rank and fortune, they are not of much avail here; indeed, they are superfluities, which can never be deemed necessary to our happiness.

But, notwithstanding all this, Madam, I regret you very sincerely; so I do the President Henault, and also Monsieur d'Alembert, for whom I have a very great regard, as I think him one of the wisest men of whom France could ever boast. If I cannot see the President Henault, I can read him; and I think I may now boast of being better acquainted with his book than he is himself. It has been of great use to me, for my Age of Louis the Fourteenth. I must beg leave to differ from him, with respect to two or three parts of it; but it is with all due deference to his very superior merit. I am merely disputing for a little nook of earth, with a man who possesses, at least, a hundred leagues of territory.

You have deigned to mention Rome Preserved to me! it is taking me on my weak side, Madam; spiteful people would explain what I have just written by saying, that this tragedy is a proof of my weakness. But that is not exactly my meaning. I have worked at it, with all the care, with all the zeal, and with all the patience that I am master of: I had much rather

have it read by people of your turn of mind, than to expose it to the criticisms of the public. I think there is such a dissimilarity between Paris and ancient Rome, and between our young men and Cato or Cicero, that I might almost as well bring forward Confucius.

You will tell me that Crebillon's Catilina has succeeded; but that was because the author was more ingenious than I am; he took care not to write in French. Apropos, Madam, do not shew my letter, except to the indulgent president, and to the discreet d'Argental; if I write in *French*, it is for you and them.

I have expected, month after month, to be enabled to pay you a visit; but my enchantment retains me prisoner; I should dread the not being able to return to Potzdam; and I am very willing to remain wherever I find myself very comfortably situated; yet I am resolved to run all chances; but I cannot say when; I can only be answerable for my sentiments—my fate, or my destiny, must decide with respect to every thing else.

We are in daily expectation of the Encyclopædia; and we may also, perhaps, have Mademoiselle de Puvigne. Has she not had some reason to complain of the old Bishop of Mirepoix, or of the Sorbonne? I have heard that this learned Sorbonne intended to condemn Buffon's system,

and

and the lively sallies of the President de Montesquieu. It is also expected that they have lain St. John's New Year's Gift upon the shelf, and that Messieurs the clergy——Adieu, Madam; I am so accustomed to liberty of speech, that I am continually ready to expose my folly.

P. S. You often see the Abbé de Chauvelin; he makes me jealous of my works; he likes them, and yet he does not like me. You condescend to write to me, and he forsakes me; he thinks it necessary to break with people, because they are at Potzdam; nay, he even makes a virtue of it. I have the best heart of the two. Continue to honour me with your remembrance, Madam, and suffer me to anticipate the delight of spending the last years of a very philosophical life in your society.

Colmar, 3d March, 1754.

Your letter, Madam, affected me more than you would suppose, since I can assure you, that my eyes grew moist, while reading the misfortune which has befallen yours. I had imagined, from M. de Formont's letter, that you were rather in the dusk, but not absolutely in the dark. I thought you were much in the same situation as Madame de Staal; with this advantage,

tage, you can boast of possessing that most inestimable of all blessings, liberty. You are perfectly your own mistress, and reside in your own house; while she is a dependant upon the Princess, with whom she resides, and is obliged to be the slave of etiquette and ceremonial; and often, for the sake of peace and quietness, to enact the hypocrite: you, on the contrary, are surrounded by real friends, who both think and speak with freedom, in your presence.

I therefore only regretted, in your eyes, the loss of your beauty; and I knew you were such a philosopher, that that would not have occasioned you a moment's concern: but, if you are absolutely blind, I agree you are very much to be pitied. Though you have an excellent example in M. de S——, who has been blind since he was twenty years old, and who is always gay; nay, he may be said to fall into the extreme in that respect. But I agree with you, that life is, at the best, not very desirable; yet we seem, from a sort of invincible instinct, to be very anxious for its preservation, because, in addition to this instinct, Nature has endowed us with what remained at the bottom of Pandora's box—namely, hope.

It is only when this hope quite forsakes us, or when we are seized with a species of melancholy, bordering on insanity, that we are able to triumph

umph over the instinct which attaches us to life, and are induced to endeavour to leave a house, which we think is very badly built, and which we have neither the hope nor the wish to improve. Two people, in this part of the world, came to such a resolution, no long time since.

One of these philosophers was a girl of eighteen, whose head had been turned by the Jesuits, and who, to get rid of them, set out for the other world. I am not, at least at present, inclined to follow her example, as I have sunk no inconsiderable sum in annuities for life, upon the treasury of two sovereigns, and I should be inconsolable were my death to enrich two crowned heads.

If you enjoy any similar annuities, Madam, pray take great care of yourself; be very sparing in your diet, go to bed early, and you will live to be a hundred.

I agree the proceedings of *Denis of Syracuse* are as incomprehensible as he is himself: he is a strange man; one may, with justice, boast of having been at *Syracuse*, as, I can assure you, it is like no other place upon the face of the globe.

The Plato of St. Maloes, M. de Maupertius, with his flat nose, and squinting look, is almost as strange a mortal: Nature endowed him with both wit and talents; but his excessive self-love has

has rendered him both ridiculous, wicked, and very spiteful. Can there be any thing more abominable, than his having persecuted his worthy physician *Alkakia,* who wished to have cured him of his folly, by administering lenitives to his disordered imagination? Who can have told you that I had any thoughts of marriage? I am a very pretty fellow, to think of taking to myself a wife! for six months of the year, I never leave my room; and out of the twelve hours of the day, I am in continual pain during ten. If any worthy apothecary had a well-made, pretty daughter, who perfectly understood the agreeable art of administering g—rs, and who excelled in making chicken broth, and who could read so as to be understood, why I might be tempted to commit matrimony; but, at present, I can only hope and wish that I may be permitted to spend the evening of that *stormy day* which we call *life,* in your society. I knew you during the most brilliant part of your morning; and I should consider it as a very great indulgence, were I permitted to assist in consoling you for your recent misfortune, and to converse freely with you, during the few short moments we still have in store, and which are not followed by any definite space of time.

I hardly know what will become of me—nor do I much care; but this you may believe,

Madam,

Madam, that you are the person in the world for whom I have the most tender respect, and the most unalterable regard.

Suffer me to request you would say a thousand kind things in my name to M. de Formont. Does the President Henault still prefer the Queen to you? to be sure, the Queen is a very clever woman.

Adieu, Madam; believe me, when I assure you that I sincerely feel for your irksome situation; and that, even upon the borders of my grave, I should wish to contribute, as far as laid in my power, to your felicity. Do you propose to remain at Paris? or do you mean to spend the summer in the country? Are all places, and every body, become indifferent to you? I shall never be so, respecting you and your concerns.

Colmar, 23d of April, 1754.

I CONSIDER myself as very culpable, Madam, for not having sooner answered your last letter: my bad state of health does not excuse me, even in my own opinion; since, though I can hardly, as yet, write myself, I might have dictated a few melancholy ideas to some other person, which would not have been displeasing to you, who

are

are so fully acquainted with all the miseries of this life, and so fully undeceived, respecting all its brilliant meteors and illusions.

I think I advised you to take great care of your health, were it only to spite those who have granted you life annuities. This is one of the only pleasures I still enjoy. The moment I feel any symptoms of indigestion, I recollect that two or three princess will be my heirs; this gives me, out of pure malice, fresh courage, and I immediately conspire against them, by repeated doses of rhubarb, and an additional *dose* of sobriety. Yet, anxious as I feel to provoke them, by living to a great age, I have had a very serious fit of illness: in addition to which, these c-s-d Annals of the Empire, which seem to be the extinguished of my imagination, and which take up all my time, have induced me to delay writing to you. I am labouring at these inspired Annals for a Princess of Saxony, who deserves to receive a much more agreeable homage from my pen, as she is a most amiable woman, and at whose court you are much better treated than at the Duchess du Maine's. You also enjoy a much greater degree of liberty than at Sceaux; but, unfortunately, the climate is bleak, beyond all endurance; and, at present, I am particularly fond of the sun. You cannot see much of it at present, Madam, in consequence

of

of the state of your eyes; but there is no small degree of pleasure in feeling revivified by its warmth. The dreadful winter we have had has put every one, more or less, out of sorts, and the news which we hear is not calculated to enliven us.

I wish I could send you any trifles to amuse you; but the works upon which I am now labouring are by no means amusing.

I was become an Englishman in London; I am a German in Germany. My camelion skin would assume a more lively hue, were I near you; your imagination would remove the languor of my mind.

I have read the Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke. I think he spoke better than he has written. Indeed, I must acknowledge that I think his style is as obscure as his conduct is mysterious. He has drawn a most frightful picture of the Earl of Oxford, without bringing forward the slightest proof in support of his assertions. This is the same Earl of Oxford whom Pope represents as being very superior to the caprices of fortune, perfectly free from the rage of party faction, totally devoid of ambition, and by no means afraid of death.

Bolingbroke had much better have employed his leisure in writing a good account of the war which

which followed the succession, of the peace of Utrecht, with which he might have blended the character of Queen Ann, those of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, that of Louis the XIVth, and of the Duke of Orleans; to which he might have added those of the French and English ministers. He might have introduced his own apology, amongst these more interesting concerns, and it might then have been handed down to posterity; instead of which, both it and him will soon be consigned to oblivion, the little book he has left us is so badly written, and the style and dates are so confused.

I cannot conceive how a man, who seemed to have such noble and elevated ideas, can have written any thing so trifling. His translator is much to blame, for saying that I wish to proscribe the study of facts: I reproach his Lordship with having given us too few, and with having mangled the few events he does mention. Yet I can suppose his Memoirs may have afforded you some pleasure, and that you fancied yourself among your acquaintance, while reading them.

Adieu, Madam; let us bear our share of human misery with patience. Courage is of very great use; it flatters our self-love, diminishes our sufferings, but it cannot restore our sight; therefore

fore I continue to pity you; and, indeed, I am often affected, almost to tears, when I think of you.

A thousand compliments to M. de Formont. When you see the President Henault, do not forget to mention me to him; and be assured that I am, and ever shall be, most respectfully, yours.

Colmar, 19th of May, 1754.

Do you understand Latin, Madam? No; else you would not have asked whether I like Pope better than Virgil. Ah! Madam, all our modern languages are dry, poor, and wholly devoid of harmony, when compared to those which were spoken by our first masters, the Greeks and the Romans: we are merely to be compared to country fiddlers. Besides, how could you expect me to compare epistles to an epic poem, to the love of Dido, the burning of Troy, and the descent of Æneas into hell?

I think Pope's Essay on Man is one of the first and best didactic poems; but do not let us place any work upon an equality with Virgil. You are merely acquainted with him in a French dress; but poets cannot bear translating. Can you translate music? I really pity you, Madam, endowed as you are with such an exqui-

site degree of taste, and of refined sensibility, for not being able to read Virgil: but I should pity you more, were you obliged to read the Annals, short as they are. Germany, even in miniature, can never charm a French imagination, especially if it resembles yours.

I had much rather send you the Maid of Orleans, since you are fond of epic poems. This one is longer than the Henriade, and the subject is of a gayer nature; therefore it is more to the advantage of our imagination, which is often straitened by the severity of our rules, in serious works. Historic facts, and the austerity of religion, dipped my wings in the Henriade; they have grown again with the Maid of Orleans. Her annals are much more agreeable than those of her empire.

If M. de Formont is still at Paris, pray recall me to his recollection; and if he has left you, pray do not forget to mention me to him when you write. I am going to try the waters of Plombieres, not that I hope they will restore my health, since I have long since made up my mind upon that subject, but because our friends are there. I have spent seven whole months at Colmar, during which I have never left my room, and I think I should do the same at Paris, if you were not there.

I am at last convinced that all that is said, and

all

all that is done, is not worth the trouble of going from home, either to hear or see: one may therefore derive some advantage from a bad state of health; it prevents us from being annoyed by society. This does not hold good with respect to you; society is as necessary to you, as a good violin is to Guignion, because he is the king of fiddlers. M. d'Alembert is truly worthy of you, and much superior to the age he lives in: he does me infinitely too much honour; and he may rest assured, that if I consider him as the greatest philosopher, and the wisest man we have, it is by no means in return for his very good opinion of me.

I write to you but seldom, Madam, though, next to the pleasure of reading your letters, I experience the greatest in answering them, as well as I am able: but I am engaged in some very laborious works, which, with the agreeable pastime of the cholic, fully engages all my time; indeed, I have hardly a moment to spare, as I work, or I suffer, from morning till night. This fills up every hour, not very agreeably, I allow; but where is happiness to be met with? I really do not know; I wish anybody could resolve this problem.

Between two Mountains, 2d of July 1754.

I HAVE been ill, Madam: I have been a monk, in the Abbey of Senones; I have spent a month with St. Augustine, Vertulien, Origene, and Raban. The converse of the fathers of the church, and the learned men of the age of Charlemagne, is very inferior to yours; but what could I have to say, buried as I am among the mountains of Vosges? and how could I have written to you, when I was so fully employed in consulting these sage doctors, and beaux esprits?

And in the very midst of my consultations with these reverend divines, I was obliged, in obedience to the orders of your friend, M. d'Alembert, to write him some articles for his Encyclopædia; this I have done, but very wretchedly; my late historical researches have deadened my imagination: the more I become acquainted with the seventh and eighth century, the less I become proper to figure in this, and especially to entertain you.

M. d'Alembert required me to write upon wit, which was about as wise as had he assigned either Father Mabillon or Father Montfaucon such a task. He will repent having employed a man who has broke his violin to compose merry tunes.

And you, Madam, you will repent having desired

desired me to write to you. I am no longer of this world, and I do not find myself the worse for not being so. I shall feel equally interested respecting you; but, situated as we both are, what can we do for each other? We must acknowledge that all which we have seen, and all that we have done, has vanished like a dream; that pleasure has left us in the lurch, and that we must not place too great a dependence upon men.

We may, to be sure, console ourselves, by saying, that we have met with very little consolation in this world. We can only enjoy ourselves in it, by the means of illusions; and, after a certain age, all illusions and delusions fade before our eyes. I am convinced that there is but one resource in old age, which is to be always occupied; this may enable us to endure our existence, without gnawing our own flesh, out of pure vexation, to find we are no longer fit for any thing.

I have spent a month with a Benedictine friar of eighty, who was writing a History of France, which may afford a person a very pretty amusement when their imagination fails them; there requires neither wit nor understanding to retail old stories, and this has induced me to undertake something similar. I have waited till I gathered a little strength, before I proceeded to Plom-

bieres to be cured; I shall take the waters as I read the Fathers, without putting any faith in them.

I shall execute your orders, with respect to M. d'Alembert. I think I can guess the reason of the pretended coolness which you mention; though you seem to have forgotten the principal one, which is, that you reside at a very great distance from him. Do you know what is the most difficult to achieve at Paris?—To reach the end of the day without being sensible of ennui.

May your days be what may be deemed tolerable! and you will not be to be pitied; since, as for agreeable days, there never were any, but in the Thousand and One Nights, and in the Heavenly Jerusalem. Let us wholly resign ourselves to our fate, which only laughs at our endeavours to escape from our destiny, by which we are always impelled forward, with or against our will; let us live as long as we can, and how we can; we shall never be so happy as fools are; but let us endeavour to be so in our own way. Let us try.—What a silly word! when it does not depend upon us to be so; we are mere clocks—absolute automatons.

Adieu, Madam; my clock would willingly strike the hour that will bring him nearer to you.

From

From the Délices, 5th May, 1756.

Madam, I was both greatly astonished and highly gratified by the receipt of your letter, though it has convicted me of having been very negligent. How came I thus to defer writing to you—me, who still have the free use of my eyes? and how were you able to address me, who have lost the use of yours?

You have little parallel lines, you say, which you place upon your paper, and which serve to guide your hand; you therefore no longer require a secretary, you only require a reader. I have not afforded the latter much occupation of late; but you have, nevertheless, been often in my thoughts, and I am always in hopes that you will recover your sight. But I had almost forsworn letter-writing, except in answer to letters of business, or upon indispensable occasions, since I have been overwhelmed with business during the last twelvemonth, to the great detriment of my health; in addition to which, I have had to manage my house, and to overlook the cultivation of my garden, not to mention my agricultural pursuits; therefore, buried, as I may say, in the Alps, immersed over head and ears in books and rural pursuits, I felt myself incapable of contributing to your amusement, much less

to your consolation; since after having formerly held forth in praise of the pleasures of this world, I had began to dwell upon its troubles and vexations. I have followed the example of Solomon: without being equally wise, I have seen that all was merely vanity and affliction, and that there is certainly many evils to be met with upon earth.

You must be of my opinion, Madam, because of your situation; and I dare say every one has, more or less, felt convinced that I am in the right. Of Jupiter's two tuns, the largest has fallen to the share of evil; but I should like to know why Jupiter had this tun made of as enormous a size as the famous one at Citeaux? or did this said tun make itself? This deserves examination. I have been thus charitable for the benefit of the human race; for as for myself, if I dared, I should be very well satisfied with what has fallen to my lot.

The first step towards happiness, is the being able to live conformably to our situation in life, and to our ideas of comfort. That once attained, we have no right to complain; and we ought to be at least patient, when suffering under the cholic.

I presume, Madam, that you derive many more advantages from your situation, than I do from mine. You are formed for society, and

yours

yours must be anxiously sought by all those who are worthy your notice. The loss of your sight renders the conversation of your friends necessary to your comforts, and of course more agreeable than ever; for our greatest pleasures are derived from our wants. You require to live in Paris; you would perish with ennui in the country; while I am fully resolved to end my days in solitude. Ours are different complaints, and they require different remedies.

I agree that it is very grievous to spend ones days at a distance from you; indeed, this is one of those vexatious circumstances which induces me to doubt whether "*whatever is, is right.*" All ought to be right with the President Henault: if there is any one for whom the tun of good is opened, he is the man. The Marshall de Richelieu will take a long draught out of it, if he takes Port Mahon. This Island of Minorca was formerly called the Isle of Venus, therefore it ought to surrender to M. de Richelieu.

Adieu, Madam; believe me that the banks of Lake Leman is not the place where you are the least admired and respected.

From

From the Delices, 12th January, 1759.

Libre d'ambition, de soins et d'esclavage,
Des sottises du monde éclairé spectateur,
Il se garda bien d'être auteur,
Et fut heureux autant que sage.
Il fuyait le vain nom d'auteur;
Il dédaigna de vivre au temple de mémoire,
Mais il vivra dans notre cœur :
C'est sans doute assez pour sa gloire.

The flowers, Madam, that I am endeavouring to strew upon the tomb of our friend Formont, are dry and withered like myself. My talents are leaving me; age destroys every thing. What can you expect from a rustic, who no longer pretends to any knowledge, but that of planting and sowing in their proper season? I have preserved my sensibility; this is all I can boast, and that I reserve for you; but I very seldom write, except when occasion requires.

What shall I say to you from my hermitage? You will not write me any thing respecting the wheel of fortune, upon which our ministers turn, sometimes up and sometimes down; nor will you enter into any details respecting the public, nor the more private follies of the day. Letters, which were formerly the effusions of the heart, the consolation of the absent, and which were written

written in the language of truth, are now only so many sorrowful proofs of the dread under which every one labours of saying too much, and of the consequent restraint of the mind. People tremble at the bare idea of suffering a word to escape them, which may be misinterpreted; they can no longer venture to trust their thoughts to the post.

I do not write to the President Henault; but I wish him, as I told you, a long life, and the full enjoyment of his health. I am indebted for the recovery of mine, to the wise plan I have of late adopted. If I dare, I should believe myself wise, I am so completely happy. I have only began to live, since I sought for peace and quietness in retirement; every other mode of life would now be insupportable. Paris is necessary for you; it would be the death of me: every one ought to remain in their element. I am very sorry mine is so incompatible with yours, as that causes my sole affliction.

You have also tried the country, but it did not suit you, Madam; you require the society of amiable people, as much as Rameau did to be surrounded by connoisseurs in music. A person must, besides, be partial to rural pursuits, and to experiments in agriculture, to enjoy the country. I have a great deal of land, which I cultivate myself. Yet I should prefer your saloon,

loon, to all my corn-fields and my fine meadows; but it was my destiny to end my days amongst corn, oil, cows, and Genevians.

These Genevians are all very reasonable, and have, generally speaking, very cultivated minds. They are so very obliging, that they visit me, and are by no means affronted at my not visiting them. Except I was Madame de Pompadour, I could not be treated more to my taste.

Such is my life, Madam; I am, as you very justly supposed, tranquil, yet fully occupied; opulent, and yet a philosopher; but, above all, perfectly free; though more than ever devoted to you; which induces me to assure you, that I am, with the most tender respect and the most inviolable attachment, your, &c. &c.

From the Delices, 13th October, 1759.

It is very grievous, Madam, for a man who lives with you to be rather deaf; I do not pity you so much for being blind. Thus the suit between the deaf and the blind is decided; certainly the one who cannot hear you is the most unfortunate.

You are the only person, Madam, at Paris, to whom I write, because your imagination was always in unison with my own heart; but I cannot forgive

forgive your requiring me to read English novels, when you will not read the Old Testament. Please to tell me where you can find a more interesting history than that of Joseph, when *comptroller-general* in Egypt, making himself known to his brothers? Do you think nothing of Daniel, when he so ingeniously confounds the two elders? Though Tobit is not so good, yet I think it far superior to Tom Jones, in which there is nothing passable, except the character of the barber.

You ask me what you ought to read, as sick people inquire what they ought to eat; but it is necessary to have an appetite, and you have but little appetite and a great deal of taste. Happy those who are hungry enough to devour the Old Testament. Do not laugh at it: this book renders me much more familiar with the manner of ancient Asia, than Homer does; it is the most precious monument of antiquity. Can there be any thing more worthy our attention, than a whole people situated between Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, who were, during six hundred years, ignorant of the dogmas respecting the immortality of the soul, which were known and believed at Memphis, at Babylon, and at Tyre? When we read for instruction, we remark every thing that had escaped us when we merely read with our eyes.

But

But you, who do not even feel interested in the history of your own country, what pleasure will you take in that of the Jews, of Egypt, and of Babylon? I like the manners of the Patriarchs, not because they slept with their handmaids, but because they cultivated the ground as I do. Suffer me to read the Bible, and let us say no more about it. But you, Madam, do you pretend to read as you talk? to take up a book as you would enquire the news of the day, run through it, and then throw it down; take up another upon a very different subject, and lay that down for a third? If so, you cannot derive much pleasure from reading.

To read with pleasure, we must be something of enthusiasts, and have our mind fixed upon some great object which interests us; we must also be very ardent in our search after instruction, as nothing so agreeably occupies the mind. You are often a prey to ennui, therefore you only seek for amusement, and books will not always afford you this.

If you were fortunate enough to understand Italian, you might make sure of a month's amusement with Ariosto: you would faint with joy; you would read the most elegant and the most easy poetry, which appears to be the mere effusions of the most fertile imagination that Nature ever bestowed upon man. Every novel or romance

romance becomes insipid, when compared to Ariosto: every thing seems flat in his presence, and more particularly our Mirabeaux's translation of him.

If you are the virtuous woman, Madam, I have always supposed you to be, I will do myself the honour to send you a canto or two of the Maid of Orleans, which no one has yet seen, and in which the author has endeavoured, though very feebly, to imitate the simplicity and ease of style which so peculiarly distinguish this great man: I have by no means succeeded, but I may have given people a faint idea of his beauties.

Your friend must be your reader; they may afford you both a quarter of an hour's amusement, and let me tell you, that is a great deal. You must read them when you have nothing else to do, when your mind requires trifles, since one never ought to enjoy any pleasure that we do not feel we want.

If you are anxious to read a very faithful picture of this vile world, you shall do so some day, in a General History of the Follies of the Human Race, which I have finished very impartially. Out of spite, I have given the world a sketch of this work some time ago, because some fragments of it had already appeared in print; but I have grown bolder of late, and I have drawn men as they are.

The

The sort of half liberty with which they begin to write in France, still displays the shameful chains which continue to shackle the pens and imaginations of authors. All your great Histories of France are diabolical, not only because the foundation is dry and mean, but because the Daniels are still more mean. It is being very absurdly prejudiced, to dare to pretend that France was of any consequence in the world, from the time of Raoul and Eudes, till the reign of Henry the Fourth, and the illustrious age of Lewis the Fourteenth. We have been barbarians and fools, when compared to the Italians, with respect to the fine arts.

It is only during the last thirty years, that we have learnt a little good philosophy from the English. We cannot boast of a single new invention. The Spaniards have conquered a new world; the Portugueze have discovered a road to India, through the seas of Africa; the Arabians and the Turks have founded the most powerful empires; my friend the Czar Peter, has created, in twenty years, an empire, which extends itself to the distance of two thousand leagues; the Scythians of my Empress Elizabeth have just beat my King of Prussia, while our armies are driven by the peasants of Zell and Wolfenbuttel.

We have had the wit to establish ourselves in

 Canada,

Canada, upon the snow, between bears and beavers; while the English have populated, with their flourishing colonies, four hundred leagues of the finest country in the world, and are driving us from our *cool retreat* in Canada.

We now and then build a few ships, for the use of the English; but we build them so badly, that when they condescend to take them, they complain that we only give them clumsy, heavy, bad-sailing vessels.

I leave you, therefore, to judge whether it would be a very agreeable task, either to write or to read a history of France.

The greatest merit of which France can boast, her only merit, her sole superiority, consists in having given birth to a small number of men of genius and talents, who have led to their language being spoken at Vienna, at Stockholm, and at Moscow. Neither your ministers, your intendants, nor your first clerks, have any thing to do with this species of glory.

But what are you to read, Madam? The Duke d'Orleans, the regent, condescended so far as to enter into conversation with me one evening, during a ball at the Opera-house: he said a great deal in praise of Rabelais; and I thought he must, for a Prince, have kept very bad company, who had vitiated his taste, as I then held Rabelais in the most sovereign contempt. I

 have

have since taken him up, and as I have examined more minutely the things he turns into ridicule, I must acknowledge, that, his vulgarity excepted, of which he is much too bountiful, great part of his book afforded me infinite amusement. If you wish to make a serious study of him, it only depends upon yourself; but I am afraid you are not sufficiently learned, and that you are too delicate.

I wish any body had pruned in French, the philosophical works of the late Lord Bolingbroke: he is a most prolix personage, and wholly devoid of method; but it might be reduced into a work which would prove the death-warrant of prejudices, and would prove of the greatest assistance to our reason. There is another Englishman, who is, in my opinion, much his superior, David Hume, whose works have been translated, but with too much reserve; we translate from the English, as badly as we fight against them by sea.

Would to God, Madam, for your sake, that they had been able only to have faithfully copied Dean Swift's Tale of a Tub; it is a real mine of pleasantry, of which no other work can give you the slightest idea. Pascal only amuses us at the expence of the Jesuits; Swift amuses and instructs us, at the expence of the whole human race. How partial I am to the English

boldness!

boldness! how fond I am of people who speak as they think! It is merely living by halves, if we dare only think by halves.

Have you ever read, Madam, the very feeble translation of the very feeble Anti-Lucrece of the Cardinal de Polignac? He formerly read me about twenty lines of it, which I thought very fine: the Abbé de Rothelin assured me that the remainder was even superior to what I had heard. I was therefore ready to compare the Cardinal to an ancient Roman, and was half-inclined to believe him superior to Virgil; but when his poem appeared, I found I had been egregiously mistaken; as it is a poem devoid of poetry, and an attempt at philosophy, which is equally devoid of reason.

Independent of the admirable pictures which are to be met with in Lucrece, and which will insure to his book the admiration of the remotest posterity, there is a third canto, which abounds in solid reasoning, which has never been properly understood by the translators, though it deserves to be properly introduced to the public notice. We have only a very bad translation of it, by a Baron des Coutures. I will, if I live, put this third canto into verse, that is, if I can—well understood.

Meanwhile, can you summon sufficient courage to listen to about forty or fifty pages of

this des Coutures? for example, from book the 3d, page 281, volume the first, beginning at these words, "*we do not perceive;*" in the margin, it says 12th argument. Examine this 12th argument, and go on to the 27th; but do it with attention, if you think it worth the trouble.

We are all of us engaged in a common cause against Nature, which must be terminated after a time; and yet no one seems inclined to examine the details and minutia of this important suit. I only require you to listen to about fifty pages of this third book; because it is the best possible preservative against the silly notions of the vulgar multitude, and forms the surest rampart against the miseries of superstition. And when we reflect that three-quarters of the Roman Senate, beginning with Cæsar, were of Lucrece's opinion, it must be acknowledged that we are great blackguards, to begin with Joli de Fleury.

You ask me what I think, Madam? I think that we are very despicable, and that there are but a very small number of men and women scattered upon the face of the earth, who dare to display a little common sense. I think you are of this number; but to answer what purpose? none that I know of. Read the parable of the Bramin, which I did myself the honour to send you; and I exhort you to enjoy as much as you can of life, which is at best but of little value;

and

and not to fear death, which, in fact, is merely a relief from suffering.

As your income chiefly consists in life annuities, the recent regulations are less inconvenient to you than to many others—every one for themselves, saith the proverb. But ask your friend whether people were not much more to be pitied in 1708 and 1709? these recollections are very consoling.

The first scene of the *play* was highly applauded—the rest is hissed; but possibly the good folks in the parterre are in the wrong. It is very clear that it requires money to act upon the defensive, since the English are ruining themselves to attack us.

My letter has swelled into a volume, and a very bad volume: throw it in the fire, and make yourself as happy as circumstances will admit of your being—I cannot give you more judicious advice.

From the Delices, 12th April, 1760.

I HAVE not sent you, Madam, any of those trifles, with which you sometimes, for a moment, condescend to amuse yourself. I have entirely broke with mankind for more than six weeks; I

have been buried in my imagination; then came on my rural occupations, and finally the fever, and in consequence of all these wise arrangements, you have had nothing, nor probably will you have any thing for some time to come.

Only desire your secretary to write me that Madame wants amusement, that she is in very good health, very well disposed, and in very good humour, but she orders you to send her some trifles; this will suffice; I will immediately send off either a scientific, a comic, a philosophical, or a poetical packet, if you condescend to state which you should prefer, with this proviso, that you will throw it into the fire, as soon as you have had the contents read to you.

Madame was such an enthusiast respecting Clarissa, that I have read it as a sort of recreation, while I was confined with the fever. But it positively set my blood in a flame. It was a cruel task, for a man who is as impatient as I am, to have to wade through nine whole volumes, in none of which I met with any thing to interest me, as I merely discovered that Miss Clarissa was in love with a rake of the name of Lovelace. I said to myself, more than once—if all these people were my relations or my friends, I should feel no interest in their concerns. The author merely struck me as being a very ingenious

nious man, and who being perfectly aware of the curiosity of mankind, promises them something better in every succeeding volume, that he may sell his book. At last, I found Miss Clarissa in a very bad house, and that greatly affected me.

The Theodora of Peter Corneille, who resolves, from a principle of Christianity, to visit La Fillon, does not come up to Clarissa, neither in point of sentiment or with respect to situation; but, with the exception of having felt for this Englishwoman, when she was so badly situated, I derived no pleasure from the lecture of this novel; and I should consider it as a very great penance, were I condemned to read it again; and no book can be really good, which cannot be read with pleasure a second time.

The only good works of this kind are those which continually present fresh pictures to the imagination, and which flatter the ear by the harmony of their style. Men require painting and music to be discreetly intermixed, from time to time, with a few short philosophical precepts. This is why Horace, Virgil, and Ovid, will always please, except when translated, which is sure to spoil them.

After I had waded through Clarissa, I read several chapters of Rabelais, such as the combat of Brother John des Entomures, and the holding of the council at Picrocole; I almost know them

by heart, and yet I read them with the greatest pleasure, because they contain a most lively picture of the world.

Not that I am inclined to place Rabelais by the side of Horace; but though I agree that Horace is the first writer of good epistles, Rabelais, when he is good, is the first of buffoons: there should not be two men of this trade in a nation; but there should be one. I am truly repentant, for having formerly said so much harm of him.

But there is a still greater pleasure than all this—it is the seeing a fine crop of grass and corn in our fields; it is that in which the real happiness of men consists; all the rest is merely illusion.

I beg your pardon, Madam, for having mentioned a pleasure which requires us to be in possession of our eyes, as you can no longer enjoy any but those which proceed from the mind. I admire the fortitude with which you bear the deprivation of sight, though you certainly enjoy all the advantages of society. I agree that general conversation generally rolls upon the news of the day, and when every one has given their opinion, why it becomes rather insipid: our inclinations and our passions constitute our only support in this world. You have taken up philosophy, in the place of these said passions—it is but a poor substitute; my

tender

tender and respectful attachment for you has re-implaced mine. May your friend continue to enjoy his health; I wish he would sometimes do me the favour to remember me.

From Ferney, the 15th January, 1761.

I BEGIN by excepting you, Madam; but were I to address myself to any of the other ladies of Paris, I should say, "It becomes you, who lead a life of comparative and happy idleness, to affirm that you have not a moment to spare; it becomes you to say this to a poor man, who has a hundred workmen and a hundred oxen to manage, who is besides fully employed in turning into ridicule the Jesuits and the Jansenists, striking to the right and left, first at St. Ignatius, then at John Calvin; in writing tragedies, no matter whether good or bad; in unravelling that chaos, the records of Petersburgh; and who has, besides, several lawsuits upon his hands; not to mention that he is engaged in a correspondence, which extends from Pondicherri to Rome; he may, poor soul, with truth, declare, that he has not a moment to spare." Nevertheless, Madam, I can always find time to write to you; and I never think I am so agreeably employed, except while reading your letters.

You

You despise Ezekiel too much, Madam; the levity with which you mention this great man seems to originate in the frivolity of your country. I can forgive your not chusing to breakfast as he did. Paparel was the only person for whom that honour was reserved. But let me tell you, that Ezekiel was more looked up to in his time, than Arnaud and Quesnel were in theirs. Do you know that he was the first who durst give the lie to Moses, that he took the liberty of declaring, that God would not punish the children, for the iniquities of their fathers, which occasioned a schism amongst his nation? And, pray, was it not very flattering to the Jews to be assured, that after feeding upon ordure, they should be allowed to gorge themselves with human flesh?

You are by no means curious, Madam, to be made acquainted with the manners and morals of different nations. If you were so, I would prove to you, that there is not a people who have not commonly eaten little boys and girls; and you must acknowledge, that there could not be so great a sin in eating two or three, as in cutting the throats of thousands, as we are now politely doing in Germany.

M. de Trudaine does not know what he says, when he tells you that I am in good health; but I must acknowledge, that it is the only thing in which

which he is mistaken: I never met with a person whose mind was more amiable, nor whose judgment was more correct. I am delighted to hear he is of your society, as I would not deprive you of him, except to make him my overseer, for I am very much in need of an overseer who would like me.

I am passionately fond of being the master in my own house; new stewards or overseers like to be masters everywhere, and this difference of opinion is sometimes very perplexing.

I am by no means of the opinion of that *good regent* who spoilt *everything in France.* He maintained, you say, that all men were either rogues or fools: there are certainly a great many of both sorts, and perhaps there were no others about the Palais Royal; but I will point out to you, whenever you chuse, twenty good souls, who are neither foolish, nor inclined to roguery. Beginning with yourself, Madam, and the President Henault, I have besides a very good opinion of our philosophers: I think the Diderots and the d'Alemberts as virtuous as they are enlightened. This idea is a sort of counterpoise, in my mind, to all the evils of this life.

Truly, Madam, I should greatly enjoy being of your supper-party with the President Henault and the Marshal de Richelieu; but till I can join such a trio, I promise you, vanity apart, that I will

will tell you as pretty stories as those in the *Thousand and One Nights,* and which shall have the superior advantage of being true.

Yes, Madam, I should be very happy, the happiest of the happy, could I talk with you, or rather could I hear you. It would be no bad joke to see me arrive at St Joseph, with Madame Denis and Mademoiselle Corneille, who will be the exact counterpoise to pedantry; but, remember, I shall never be able to spend more than the months of January and February at Paris.

You are not aware, Madam, of the time it requires to manage and to govern all those who are employed in cultivating my domains; you can have no idea of the comfort and the liberty which are attached to such a patriarchal sort of life; it is like a renewal of one's existence. Besides, I am so insolent in my way of thinking, I sometimes make use of such rash expressions, I have such an aversion to pedants, such an antipathy to hypocrites, and I put myself into such a passion with fanatics, that I should never be able to spend more than two months at Paris.

You hope I have made my peace with those in power. I am fully convinced that I have; nay, I might, were you to put me upon my mettle, perhaps boast of my credit; but I am discreet, and I reckon it amongst my greatest blessings, the

the not being required to ask any favours of anybody, as I want nothing that any one can do for me; therefore I do not pay my court to anybody. There are old men, who are as gentle as circumspect, and as cautious as if they still had their fortunes to make. Fontenelle, for example, would not, at the age of eighty, have given his opinion respecting Freron's weekly papers. Those who are partial to such old men must not address themselves to me.

Well, Madam, have I now fully answered every article in your letter? am I a man who does not read what is written to him? am I a man who writes against the grain? Can you now have any reproach to make me, except that I have tired you with my village gossip?

When you wish it, I will send you a canto of the Maid of Orleans, which has been found in the library of a learned man. This canto would not do, I agree, to be read at court by the Abbé Grizel; but it may edify those that are friends to toleration.

Apropos, Madam, if you imagine that the Maid of Orleans is a mere pleasantry, you are in the right. There is too much of it, by twenty cantos; but there is continually a little of the marvellous, some tolerable poetry, a certain degree of interest, and, above all, a great deal of simplicity. Twenty cantos did not suffice for my subject.

There

There are forty-eight in Ariosto, who is my idol. Every poem tires me but his. I was not sufficiently fond of it in my youth; I did not understand Italian. The Pentateuch and Ariosto are now the delight of my life. But should I ever revisit Paris, Madam, I shall prefer you to the Pentateuch.

Adieu, Madam; we must play with life till the last moment; and till the last moment, I shall remain tenderly and respectfully attached to you.

From the Castle of Ferney, 6th March, 1761.

You will be surprised, Madam, at receiving letter upon letter, from a man whom you have reproached with being very negligent. You write me, that you are more than ever a prey to ennui: if I do but continue to pester you with letters, I shall easily guess in what your complaint originates; though, admitting my wise epistles, and my Maid of Orleans, to have, in some respects, brought on this lethargy, I do think the six volumes of Jean Jacques are at least as much to blame as I am. I think, that were I in your place, I should wish to be deaf, since, though you are blind, your ears are still annoyed by our follies.

I know

I know that there are people sufficiently obstinate to stand up in defence of this miserable trash, called a novel; but, notwithstanding their kindness and their courage, they will never undergo the penance of wading through it a second time. I wish Madame de la Fayette could return upon earth, that she might enjoy the pleasure of reading a Swiss novel.

Positively, everything seems to be written in the same style, from our remonstrances and our requests, down to our novels and our plays. I am every succeeding day more and more inclined to admire the age of Lewis XIV. I think, that while Moliere and la Chapelle were living, I should have been sorry to have been situated in the country of Gex; but now, I think I could not have chosen a more pleasant part of France.

You are pleased to ask me, Madame, "who is this Mademoiselle Corneille?" She is neither Peter nor Thomas: she still plays with her doll; but she is of a most happy disposition—gentle, lively, very good, very sincere, very grateful, very fond, without meaning to obtain your love, but because she really loves you. She will not be devoid of good sense; but as for ever displaying much *bon ton,* as we can boast of none, that she will probably never do. At all events, we will not send her to seek it at Madame de Wolmar's, as we are by no means inclined to Clarens, since

you have assured us that we shall not find you there. We all agree that we ought to visit St. Joseph; but then, these transmigrations are not very easily effected. I have the honour to be half a Swiss, very independent, and very happy. The very name of Paris, and of a convent, alarm me; yet my wish to see you would induce me to overcome much greater difficulties.

I had no idea of the happiness which a retired life confers upon old age. After I had attained the age of sixty, I began to reflect upon the follies that I had witnessed and had committed; and I began to perceive that the world is only the theatre of a petty, but continual, warfare, either of the cruel or the ridiculous sort, and a collection of vanity, sufficient to make one sick, as that good deist of a Jew has truly said, who has taken the name of Solomon, in Ecclesiasticus, which you do not chuse to read.

Adieu, Madam; console yourself for having been doomed to exist during a certain term, which I would have you spin out as long as you can. I found a most excellent letter upon suicide in Jean Jacques's novel, though very absurdly introduced; but it has not induced me to resolve to kill myself, and I feel perfectly assured that I should never have blown my brains out, for one of Madame de Wolmar's bitter kisses.

I did myself the honour to send you a little canto

canto of my Maid of Orleans, by the road of Versailles; I am at a loss how to send them now.

26th July, 1761.

The President Henault, Madam, has informed me how warmly you interest yourself for Peter Corneille; I leave him to return you my thanks, and to request that you would also present mine to Madame de Luxembourg. You must excuse my long silence, as I am the most indefatigable farmer within twenty leagues: could you suppose that an old man would be so absurd as to drain marshes, to grub up woods, and to build a church, while he is very busily employed about two celebrated Peters—that is to say, Peter Corneille, the father of tragedy, and Peter the Great, the father or founder of the Russian empire?

But be it remembered, that Mademoiselle Corneille is by no means concerned in what I am doing for her great-uncle. She has never as yet read a scene of Chimene; but she shall do so some years hence, and then she will see that I have been in the right. *Master Dwarf* and *Master Omer* may say and do what they please; Peter is a very great man, and always will be one, and we are blackguards: only let them shew

me a man capable of adding to the glory of his nation, let them tell me his name, and I will promise to love and respect him.

But we must return to the age of Lewis XIV. to meet with such a phenomenon; and this pierces one to the heart, at the very foot of the Alps; and, out of pure spite, I have ordered a canopy to be made for my altar; and I am very assiduously studying the bible, though I own I give the preference to Cinna.

I am playing with life, Madam: I do not know what else it is good for. Every child, old or young, must have its soap-bubbles. The bank or hillock of St. Roch, and our mountains, which divide the clouds, the trifles of Paris, and the trifles which I meet with here, are all so much alike, that I would never advise a Parisian to seek novelty in the Alps, nor a citizen of our mountains to visit Paris, upon a similar errand.

Yet I greatly regret the not enjoying your society, Madam; and I also sometimes wish for Mademoiselle Clairon; but as for all the rest of my dearly-beloved fellow-citizens, I had much rather have their room than their company.

I do not enjoy much better health than I did formerly. I live, I hardly know how, never looking beyond the present day, like many more. I presume you also patiently endure the evils of this life; at least, I exhort you to do so, with all

my heart; since it is so self-evident a truth, that we must be very happy when we shall be incapable of feeling pain, that every philosopher must feel eager to adopt so consoling an idea. Meanwhile, Madam, make yourself as happy as you can, enjoy life as much as you can, turn everything into ridicule as much as you like.

I write to you but seldom, because I never can have but the same things to say to you; and when I have often repeated to you that life is a baby, which must be rocked till it falls asleep, I shall have told you all I know.

A burgomaster of Middleburgh, with whom I am not acquainted, wrote to me, some time back, to inquire of me, as of a friend, "Whether there was such a being as God? and whether, admitting there was a supreme head of the universe, he felt at all interested in our concerns?—whether matter was eternal? whether it was capable of thought? and, finally, whether the soul was immortal?"—requesting an answer by return of post.

I frequently receive as absurd letters, once or twice a-week; they certainly contribute to my amusement.

Adieu, Madam; I shall love and respect you, till I return my body to the four elements of which it is composed.

Ferney, 18th August, 1761.

I HAVE known people, Madam, who have complained of living with fools; but you complain of living amongst people of wit. If you expected to meet with the politeness and the elegance of expression of la Fare and Saint Aulaire, with the imagination of Chaulieu, the brilliant wit of a Duke de la Feuillade, and the rare merit of the President Henault, amongst the literati of the day, why, you reckoned without your host.

You cannot interest yourself, you say, in the public concerns: that is a proof of your wisdom; but if you were, like me, exposed to the necessity of receiving daily at your table, Russians, Englishmen, and Germans, you would be rather embarrassed in being a Frenchwoman.

I am busying myself about the time past, that I may not quarrel with the time present. I think it wiser to write a commentary upon Corneille, than to read what they now write. The public news is sure to afflict me, and the new books are too great a trial for my patience.

My commentary also begins to exercise that virtue, for it will be very long. It is really a terrible undertaking, to discuss the merits of Cinna and Agesilaus, of Rodogune and Attila, and of the

Cid

Cid and Pertharite. I do not think, that since Scaliger, there has ever been so great a pedant as myself. This work will extend to seven or eight large volumes; it is enough to make me and my future readers tremble.

I presume, Madam, you are now enjoying the society of the President Henault; you must therefore become my protector, and recommend me to his notice. I have sent to the Academy the dedicatory epistle, which I think very curious; the preface to the Cid, in which there are also some anecdotes that may amuse you; my notes upon the Cid, upon the Horatii, upon Cinna, Pompey, Heraclius, and Rodogune, will not amuse you, because it is necessary to have the original work under your eyes.

I could wish that the President Henault would take all these papers from the secretary, and that he would give me his opinion upon them, and that of M. de Nivernois. I believe it would be better were they both to go to the Academy, and there pass judgment upon me; as I require the sanction of the Academy, since a work which is dedicated to that learned body ought to meet its approbation. I am not at all jealous of my opinions; but I am very anxious to render myself useful, and I can only be so, by obtaining the sanction of the Academy. I entrust you, my dear Madam,

with this negociation; that of M. de Bussy will be much more difficult.

You complain of having no occupation; employ yourself for Peter Corneille; he is worth the trouble, were it only for the sublimity of his genius, and his excessive poverty.

I am very much pleased to hear that you are reading Thoiras's History of England: you will find it more correct, more profound, and more interesting, than that of our insipid Daniel. I shall never forgive this Jesuit, for having said more respecting Father Coton than respecting Henry the IV. and for having hardly suffered us to perceive that Henry was a very great man.

If you are fond of history, I will send you one some months hence, which is very insolent, and which I believe to be true, from the one end to the other; but for the present, suffer me to devote my time to the great Corneille.

I repeat the thanks of my youthful pupil, Madam, who bears so illustrious a name, without, as yet, having any idea of the merit which is attached to it. I also beg leave to return her thanks to the Duchess de Luxembourg.

Adieu, Madam; make yourself as happy as you possibly can, since you must know that very few people really enjoy life. You are now accustomed to your privations; you have many friends,

and

and you are sure, when they come to see you, that it is to enjoy your society. I shall continue to regret the not being able to increase the number; and I shall remain most sincerely attached to you, to the very last moment of my existence.

Ferney, 18th November, 1761.

You positively afflict me, Madam; I should wish to see you happy, in this most foolish of all foolish worlds. But how can I gratify my desire? Methinks 'tis rather a pleasant circumstance not to rank among the number of idiots and fanatics which people this said world; and surely it is also very agreeable to have a great many friends. You enjoy both these advantages; and if, in addition, your digestion is good, I think your situation is not absolutely unenviable.

I am of opinion, after having well reflected upon the subject, that we should never think of death, since this thought can only serve to embitter our life. If we can but avoid any acute sufferings, we have very little reason to dread death; since, why should we feel more when that overtakes us, than when we are going to sleep? These people who ceremoniously announce its approach, are the enemies of the

human race; we ought to forbid their approach. Death of itself is nothing; but thinking of it renders us melancholy. Let us therefore banish it from our mind, and let us live from hand to mouth. Let us say, when we rise, what shall I do to-day for the benefit of my health, and for my amusement? This is all we ought to think of, at our age.

I agree that some situations are intolerable; and then the English are in the right to hang, drown, or shoot themselves: but these cases are very rare; we have almost always some consolation in reserve, or some hopes, to sustain our drooping spirits. In short, Madam, I can only exhort you to make yourself as happy as you possibly can.

Your letter made such an impression upon me, that I have answered it immediately, me who write so little. I have a dozen burthens already upon my back. I contrive to be always busy, that I may never have an idle nor a melancholy moment; and I think mine is an infallible secret to prevent languor and ennui.

I shall add to the list of those who have bespoke a set of my Corneille, the names which you have done me the honour to mention. I am passionately fond of writing these said comments; because Corneille has done honour to France, and was celebrated for those particular talents which

which have placed our writers of tragedy above those of every other nation.

Besides, I am so angry to see hypocrites, and people who are possessed by the devil, which renders them furies, declaim against theatrical amusements, that I wish to crush them with a great name.

I have not yet seen the *Queen of Golconda*, but I have seen some very pretty verses of the Abbé de Boufflers. He ought to be appointed Abbot of Chaulieu, with fifty thousand livres a-year: that would be far better than were he to continue to vegetate in Provence, with his gold cross.

Have you read the conversation of the Abbé Grizel with the comptroller of the privy purse? If you have not, I will make you a present of the copy which he has sent me.

Pray accept the tender respects of the Swiss, V***.

14th February, 1762.

It is a long time, Madam, since the pedantic commentator of Peter Corneille has done himself the honour to write to you: but I must tell you something very consoling for women in general.

There

There is, in this neighbourhood of Geneva, a little woman, who has always been of a very weak constitution, who yesterday celebrated her hundred-and-fourth birthday. You may suppose that many of her neighbours have advised her to marry again (she is a widow); but she is too fond of her family, to wish to give any more brothers to her children. Her faculties are as strong as ever: she walks well, digests well, writes very well, and perfectly understands how to manage her household affairs. I would advise you to follow her example in every respect.

I never knew of any men of this age, who retained their faculties and the use of their limbs. Bernard de Fontenelle was a mere baby, when compared to my little old woman. I hope the President Henault will, like Fontenelle, complete his century; but I think Moncrif will bury us all. I am told that his wig is better dressed and better powdered than ever. All that provokes me is, that he no longer writes verses: this is really a pity.

Apropos to Moncrif; I have sustained a great loss by the death of the Empress of Russia; but I almost immediately received a letter from the Empress-Queen, who has subscribed very handsomely for Mademoiselle Corneille, as the King of France has done: one ought always to have a few crowned heads in one's sleeve. Besides,

Mademoiselle

Mademoiselle Corneille bids fair to be a most excellent private actress.

If I had heard any news, I would retail it for your amusement; but you are always in the midst of the best company in Paris, and you do not want to know what is passing at the foot of the Alps.

Take care of your health, Madam, attend to digestion, think and laugh at all the follies of the multitude, to begin with the Inquisition at Lisbon, and to end with all the nonsense that is retailed at Paris; meanwhile, believe me to be.

27th January, 1764.

Oui, je perds les deux yeux: vous les avez perdus,
O sage du Deffand! est-ce une grande perte?
Du moins nous ne reverrons plus
Les sots dont la terre est couverte.
Et puis tout est aveugle en cet humain séjour;
On ne va qu'à tâtons sur la machine ronde.
On a les yeux bouchés à la ville, à la cour:
Plutus, la Fortune et l'Amour
Sont trois aveugles-nés qui gouvernent le monde.
Si d'un de nos cinq sens nous sommes dégarnis,
Nous en possédons quatre; et c'est un avantage
Que la nature laisse à peu de ses amis,
Lorsqu'ils parviennent à notre âge.
Nous avons vu mourir les papes et les rois:
Nous vivons, nous pensons, et notre ame nous reste.

Epicure

Epicure et les siens prétendaient autrefois
Que ce sixième sens était un don céleste
Qui les valait tous à la fois.
Mais quand notre ame aurait des lumières parfaites,
Peut-être il serait encore mieux
Que nous eussions gardé nos yeux,
Dussions-nous porter des lunettes.

You perceive, Madam, that I am a brother, and one who feels very much interested in the welfare of our republic of the * Quinze-vingts. You tell me that the present generation is not so amiable as the last; still both the partridges and the pullets have as much flavour as they had when we were young; and the flowers display the same colours. Men alone have degenerated; the foundation is still as good as ever; but the same talents are not to be met with in every age; and the talents for being amiable, which were always very rare, seem to have degenerated the most of all.

You are not altered; it is the court and the town, I have been assured by connoisseurs.

This is perhaps, in some measure, owing to their no longer reading Moncrif's "*Method of Pleasing.*" They merely busy themselves with the enormous blunders which are perpetually committed by our men in place.

Le raisonner tristement s'accrédite.

* The name of an hospital for the blind, in Paris.

How

How can any society be agreeable, in which pedantry supplies the place of wit?

You are really worthy of the homage of my Maid of Orleans; one of your bon mots* is cited in the notes of this *theological* work. But I cannot tell how to send it you, since it is impossible to do so as you desire, under cover to the queen; I dare not even have sent it to *Queen Bertha.* And it is next to impossible to send any book which has been printed in a foreign country to Paris, not even excepting the New Testament. Even the minister whom you mention will not suffer me to send any thing, neither under his cover, nor even to himself. They all seem scared, and I am sure I cannot tell why. But I will tell you what you may and can do. If, during the ensuing fortnight, I cannot meet with any civil honest traveller, to whom I can intrust my virgin Joan, desire the President Henault to procure you one of some travelling book pedlar. I suppose it will cost you from thirty to forty sous; there never was a cheaper religious book.

I am sorry your friend is so sought after, because you enjoy less of his society, and this is a great loss for both. I hope to end my days in

* That respecting St. Dennis, when carrying his head in his hands; it is alluded to in the notes attached to the first canto of this work.

peace,

peace, in the retirement I have chosen, and in the midst of the family I have chosen for myself.

Adieu, Madam; take courage; *Let us make a virtue of necessity.* Do you know that that is one of Cicero's proverbs?

24th of May, 1764.

You positively make me very uneasy, Madam; for your melancholy ideas are not merely the offspring of your reason, since I fear they are the type of your feelings. I agree that annihilation, or rather a state of new existence, is, generally speaking, preferable to enduring the troubles of this life. However, let us console ourselves, since very wise folks affirm that we shall have a taste of it: it is very clear, they say, if we may believe either Seneca or Lucrece, that we shall be, after death, what we were before we were born: but what are we to do with the two or three minutes that we are doomed to exist? We are, it is said, only so many small wheels attached to the vast machine; little animals, with two feet and two hands, like monkeys, without their agility, but, to the full, as comical, though we are gifted with a few more ideas. We are led forward by the general motion, which

which was established by the great Master of the universe; we can do nothing for ourselves; we receive every thing; we are no more masters of our ideas, than of the circulation of the blood which flows in our veins: every being, and every different mode of being, necessarily form a part of the universal law of nature. It is ridiculous—nay, impossible, they say, for man to do any thing of himself, when the multitude of stars merely move in one direction, and are by no means at liberty to alter their course. It becomes us to boast of being the absolute masters of our will, and of our actions, when every other thing in existence is a slave to the immutable order established in the world by the supreme Being!

We are therefore in a very hopeful condition, you will say; I suffer, and I am ready to quarrel with my existence, which I am inclined to c—se at one time, and to enjoy at another; I dislike to live, yet dread to die: and pray who is to better my situation, or to console me under my burdens? or who is to help me to bear up against them, since nothing in nature can come to my assistance?

Now I think I have guessed how all these very serious evils may be lessened, if not remedied. It neither rested with you nor with me to preserve our eyes; nor could we avoid losing

sing our friends; nor, in short, being situated exactly as we now are. All our deprivations, all our feelings, all our ideas, are absolutely necessary, that we may fulfil our destiny. You could not avoid writing me the very philosophical and the very melancholy letter, which I have just received from you; and I am obliged to write you, in reply, that real courage, a proper degree of resignation to the decrees of nature, a thorough contempt for all kinds of superstition, the great pleasure of feeling myself very superior to the generality of mankind, to which may be added, the permission we all have to exercise that noblest of all faculties, that of thinking, are very solid consolations. These ideas, which I was destined to recal to your recollection, will, of course, recal your philosophy. Thus I have become a machine, which may assist in strengthening your mind, and my own wise reasoning must necessarily strengthen mine; it is therefore very fortunate, since we are such mere machines, that we can be of any assistance to each other.

Your machine is one of the best in the world. Were you permitted to chuse whether you would recover your sight, or give up the pleasure of thinking, I am sure you would not hesitate a moment to give the preference to the eyes of your mind, which are far superior to those

those of the body. I have often wished that you would inform me in what light you see things, since I think your judgment is as correct as your style.

I write but seldom, because I am turned agriculturist: you have no idea of this trade, though it was that of our forefathers.

I have always been overwhelmed by the most frivolous occupations, which, nevertheless, swallow up all my time; for my most agreeable moments I am indebted to you, as your letters are my delight; and I am never better pleased, than when telling you that our souls seem to be in unison, and how sincerely I regret the distance which separates us. Every one is not like Fontenelle; so rouse your courage, Madam, and let us continue to drag our chain to the end.

Believe no one can feel more interested for you, nor be more respectfully yours.

P. S. I am very glad that no alterations have taken place, with respect to those people for whom you interest yourself. A counsellor of the parliament (M. de Laverdi) is promoted, I find, to be comptroller of the finances. He is the first counsellor who was ever so honoured. The finances will now be managed according to rule. The state, which has been as much disordered as you and I have been, may, like us, recover its health, strength, and vigour.

Ferney, 27th June, 1764.

Though we can only be said to grope about, Madam, our correspondence seems to grow more lively, and more interesting daily: your great-aunt displayed her wisdom, in neither finding fault with the times, nor with her fellow-mortals; when the horizon is clouded over, we require a shelter; and when men are very wicked, or very prejudiced, we ought either to run away from them, or to undeceive them: I am precisely in this situation.

You did not expect to be troubled with a negociation; but the purblind old fellow of the Alps is very much in need of the protection of the very judicious blind lady of St. Joseph.

Rousseau, whom you mentioned in your last, wrote to me from Montmorency, about three years ago, in these words:—

"I do not like you: you have private plays acted at your house; you corrupt the morals of my country, in return for her having afforded you an asylum. I do not like you, Sir; though I do the utmost justice to your talents."

Such a letter from a man with whom I never was in habits of intimacy, much less of correspondence, struck me as being wonderfully foolish,

foolish, very absurd, and very impertinent. How could a man who had written plays, take it into his head to reproach me with having a private theatre in my house, which is, you well know, in France? Why impertinently insinuate that Geneva had afforded me an asylum? I, who have frequently afforded one to the citizens of that republic. I live retired at my seat, and I never go to Geneva: in a word, I cannot conceive what pretence I have ever afforded Rousseau, to write me so absurd a letter. He must, of course, have been aware that I felt myself highly offended, and therefore he thought that I should seek to revenge myself; now this was for the want of knowing me better.

When they burnt his book at Geneva, and issued a warrant for his arrest, he fancied that I had created, or rather headed, the faction against him—me who never go to Geneva!

He has written to the Duchess of Luxembourg, that I have declared myself his most inveterate enemy. He has affirmed, in print, that I am the most violent and the most cunning of his persecutors—me a persecutor! This is truly *Johnny the tame rabbit* become the terror of the war, and carrying fire and sword every where. To compare me to Father *Letellier!* What folly! Seriously speaking, I do not think you

 can

can do a man a more atrocious injury, than to call him a persecutor.

If ever I spoke otherwise of Rousseau, than to give a favourable interpretation of his *Savoyard Vicar*, for which he has been so much condemned, may I be ranked amongst the most wicked of men! I would not even read any of the pamphlets that have been published against him, since I thought that, under such cruel circumstances, one ought to respect his misfortunes, and to esteem his genius.

I therefore wish to make the Marechale de Luxembourg the judge between us: I trust implicity to her equity, and I beg leave to appoint you my advocate in the cause; as I am too anxious to preserve her esteem, to suffer her to suppose me, even for a moment, capable of declaring myself the enemy of a man in such a situation.

Indeed, I have been so much hurt respecting this business, that I cannot, for the present, enter upon any other subject.

Ferney, 31st of August, 1764.

I HAVE just heard, Madam, that you have lost M. d'Argenson; if the news is true, I join in your

your affliction. We may all be compared to prisoners under sentence of death, who are suffered to amuse ourselves, for a few minutes, upon the green before our prison, till it comes to our turn to fall under the axe of the executioner.

This idea is more true than consoling. The first thing which men ought to learn, is to acquire a proper degree of courage, and firmness of mind; because, since we are born to suffer and to die, we ought to be familiarized with our hard fate. I should like to know whether M. d'Argenson died like a philosopher, or like a coward. Our last moments, in some parts of Europe, are attended with such ridiculous and disgusting circumstances, that it is very difficult to know what are the real thoughts of the dying person. Every body must undergo the same ceremonies. There have been certain Jesuits, who have had the impudence to declare, that Montesquieu died like an idiot; and they have assumed a right, from this, to engage others to follow so bright an example.

I must acknowledge, that the ancients, who were our masters in every thing, had many advantages over us; they never disturbed either the living or the dying, with any of those slavish, superstitious subjections, which are equally fatal to both. They enjoyed life in the

time of Scipio and Cæsar; they then thought and died as they chose; but as for us, they treat us like puppets.

I think you are enough of a philosopher, Madam, to be of my opinion; if you are not, burn my letter; but treasure up a little regard for me, while I do continue to crawl upon this heap of dirt, where it has pleased Dame Nature to place us.

19th February, 1766.

For the last month, Madam, I have had every day a vast mind to write to you; but I had plunged myself into the most melancholy and crabbed metaphysical researches, therefore I felt that I was not in a fit humour to address you.

You told me in your last letter, that we seemed to agree perfectly respecting *what was not*; and I have been endeavouring to discover *what is*—a most difficult task; but curiosity is the standing complaint of the human mind. I have, at least, the consolation to see that none of the fabricators of systems knew more than I do; though they affect to be very wise, I shall not follow their example, as I frankly acknowledge that I am very ignorant.

Nevertheless, useless as it has proved to be, I have

have derived a very great advantage from these researches. The study of things so much above our comprehension, renders the interest of this world very trifling in our opinion; and when one can enjoy the pleasure of losing ourselves in the immensity of space, one cares very little about what is passing in the streets of Paris.

Study has this great advantage, it enables us to live in peace with ourselves, it delivers us from the burthen which idleness imposes upon us, and it prevents us from running from home in search of news, which we are then anxious to retail from one end of the town to the other. Therefore, in the midst of mountains, covered with snow, which extend to the distance of leagues, besieged by a very rude winter, during which my eyes have refused me their service, I have spent my time in meditation.

Do not you sometimes meditate, Madam? Does not a hundred different ideas sometimes cross and jostle in your brains, respecting the eternity of the world?—respecting matter, thought, space, and an infinite being? I am tempted to believe that such are our reflections, when our passions have forsaken us, and that every body, like Matthew Garo, is anxious to know why pumpkins do not grow upon oaks.

If you do not spend your time in meditation, when you are alone, I send you a trifle, in print,

respecting some of the follies of this world, which has fallen into my hands.

The author is a merry fellow of Neufchatel, and the wits of Neufchatel may seem very insipid beings to you; besides, one seldom laughs, except we are acquainted with the people who are held up to ridicule. This was why M. de Mazarin used to say, he never made game but of his friends and relations.

Fortunately what I send you is not very long; and if it wearies you, you may throw it in the fire.

I wish you, Madam, length of days, a good appetite, and all the consolations that can render your situation less irksome; as it never fails to afflict me when I think of you, and this I do too often for my peace of mind. I request you will assure the President Henault, that I shall never cease esteeming him with all my mind, and loving him with all my heart. Suffer me to express the same sentiments for you, as I shall feel them as long as I live.

21st November, 1766.

The letter to Dr. Pansophe, Madam, was written by the Abbé Coyer; of this I am fully convinced, not only because those who know he wrote it have assured me that he was the author of it, but because,

because, having been in England early in the year, he is the only person who can be acquainted with the English names which are mentioned in this said letter. I am besides so perfectly familiar with his style—in a word, I know I am right.

But it is very wrong in him, who styles himself my friend, to have made use of my name, and to have led the world to suppose that I have written to Jean Jacques, when I positively declare that I have not written to him these seven years. I really should fancy I derived some honour from this letter to Dr. Pansophe, had I had any hand in it, as it contains some very charming and very pleasant things; but it is drawn out to too great a length; and there are many repetitions, and some parts are rather obscure. We must acknowledge, that a tone of pleasantry is one of the easiest keys in French music for a composer to hit upon. We may be almost sure of success, if we do but gaily turn our neighbour into ridicule; indeed, I am surprised that there should be so few good jesters, in a country where everything is turned into raillery.

As for me, Madam, I was by no means inclined to rally, when I wrote to David Hume, as I positively sent him my letter; it was written without reflection, just as my pen chose to run. I merely wished to state facts and dates to him; it was necessary to justify myself with respect to

the

the calumnies which that madman Rousseau had circulated.

He is a malicious madman this said Jean Jacques, and a sort of calumniator by trade; he lies with the cunning of a Jesuit, and with the impudence of a Jansenist.

Have you, Madam, seen an *Abridgment of the History of the Church*, ornamented with a preface by the King of Prussia? He speaks like a man at the head of forty thousand victorious troops, and explains himself with more pride and more disdain than the Emperor Julian ever did. Though he has shed a sufficiency of human blood during his wars, he has been extremely angry with our priests, for having shed that of innocent people at Abbeville.

The legal assassination of the Calases, and the murder of the Chevalier de la Barre, have not done much honour to our nation, nor have they greatly raised us in the esteem of foreigners. Our nation is divided into two species; the one are idle monkeys, who laugh at everything; the others are tygers, who devour everybody. The more progress reason makes on one side, the more fanaticism gnashes its teeth on the other. I am sometimes seriously afflicted; but then I console myself by displaying my monkey tricks upon the tight-rope.

As for you, Madam, who neither belong to the

race of monkeys nor to that of tygers, and who console yourself in your chimney-corner with a circle of friends worthy of your regard, for all the crimes and follies of your fellow-creatures, may your existence be prolonged, as long as it can contribute to your happiness. I frequently offer up my vows for both you and the President Henault; and conclude, respectfully your's.

3d April, 1767.

Every one, Madam, has their evil spirit, in this *blessed* world. Mine has just now favoured me with eleven fits of the ague; yet here I am, but not for long, I should suppose. Upon my word, it is a great pity that Nature, after having created me expressly to live with you, should chuse to let me die at such a distance from you. When I say that our souls have always seemed to be perfectly in unison with each other, do not fancy that my vanity is in its dotage. The fact is clear. You tell me, in your last letter, "That the things with which we can never be acquainted, cannot be necessary to our well-being." A very noble idea, Madam, a sublime truth! and, what is still better, it is a very consoling truth. Where there is nothing, the king loses his rights, and so does nature also. Make your reader read you, if you

you please, the article *Necessary*, in a certain alphabetical book, and you will find your own thought.

It is a dialogue between Selim and Osmyn, two brave Mussulmen; and Osmyn concludes, that since the divine Alcoran is not generally believed, nor generally known, it is not absolutely necessary to mankind.

As for the rest, I am perfectly convinced, that the age of Lewis XIV. is prodigiously superior to the present age; and that the atheists of these times are hardly worthy to wipe the shoes of those of old. We have none to compare to *Spinosa*.

This *Spinosa* agreed, as the ancients always did, that there was an universal spirit, or spiritual substance; and this there must be, since we all partake, in some degree, of this intellectual spirit. But our modern atheists substitute in the place of this, a sort of incomprehensible providence, and I cannot tell how many impossible calculations; which are, in fact, most pitiable nonsense. I had rather read one of la Fontaine's tales; though, by the way, these tales are as much inferior to Ariosto as a scholar is to a master. However, there is something very praiseworthy in our philosophers. Their aversion to fanaticism, and their spirit of toleration, can never be sufficiently praised; and were it for no-

 thing

thing else, they ought to be upon friendly terms with all honest people.

From atheism and its professors, I shall revert to *Semiramis*. What would you please to have me say or do? I really cannot side with Mustapha against her. Her son loves her, her people love her, she is the idol of her court; she has sent me a picture of her handsome face, surrounded by twenty large diamonds, and one of the finest fur pelisses that the north ever produced, with a code of laws, as admirable as our French jurisprudence is impertinent. They speak French at Moscow and in Siberia; though it is neither the Parliament of Paris nor the Sorbonne who have established professors of our language in these countries, which, not long since, were in a state of the most barbarous ignorance. Perhaps I may have rather contributed to this extension of the French language; therefore, suffer me to display a condescension towards an empire, of two thousand leagues extent, where I am loved and respected, while I am not excessively well-treated in that small western part of Europe where by chance I was born.

I must acknowledge, that I had rather have the pleasure of supping with you, than to remain in the midst of eternal snows, in this fine, but terrible chain of Alps, or to be running from kings

to

to empresses; since, believe me, Madam, your letters have encreased my wish to see you, till it has become almost my ruling passion. I am convinced that my soul is already running after your's.

I should be rather shame-faced before the Duchess de Choiseul. When the old Chevalier Destouches Canon, the reputed father of d'Alembert, saw a pretty and amiable woman, he used to say to her, "*Walk on, walk on, Madam; you are not the sort for me;*" and I am become rather rusticated in my country retirement.

Que m'importe que la nature
En dessinant ses traits chéris,
Pour modèle ait pris la figure
De la Vénus de Médicis?
Je suis berger, mais non Pâris.
Un vieux berger n'est pas un homme.
Je pourrais lui donner la pomme
Sans que mon cœur en fût épris,
Et sans que la maligne engeance
Des Déesses de son pays
Reprochât à mes sens surpris
D'être séduit par l'apparence.
Je sais que son esprit orné
A toute la délicatesse
Que l'on vanta dans Sévigné,
Avec beaucoup plus de justesse;
Qu'elle aime fort la vérité,
Mais ne la dit qu'avec finesse.
Ma grossière rusticité
Et mon imprudence suissesse

Auraient

Auraient grand peine à se prêter
A tant de grace et de souplesse.
Il faut que, pour bien s'ajuster
Les gens soient d'une même espèce.

Vous dont l'esprit et les bons mots,
L'imaginntion féconde,
La répartie et l'à propos
Font toujours le charme du monde :
Vous, ma brillante du Deffand,
Conversez dans votre retraite,
Vivez avec la *grand'maman** ;
C'est pour vous que les dieux l'ont faite.
Si j'allais très-imprudemment
Troubler vos séances secrètes,
Que diriez-vous d'un chat-huant
Introduit entre deux fauvettes.

Yet I should like to know who sups with you and Madame de Choiseul, who is worthy of doing so, who still supports the honour of the age? What would you have me say to you? Alas! all our trifling consolations are only so many plasters applied to, that wound our existence. But you are in possession of the best of remedies for this misfortune, since, as you are doomed to exist, how can you better employ the few minutes we are permitted to devote to enjoyment, than in devoting them to the society of friends, who are so much above the common race of mankind?

* The Duchess de Choiseul, a nickname of society in use between her and Madame du Deffand.

I was

I was very happy to hear that the President has recovered his faculties.

Hélas! qu'a-t-il pu resaisir
De cette ame qui sut vous plaire?
Quelque faible ressouvenir,
Et quelque image bien légère,
Qui ne revient qour s'enfuir!
A-t-il du moins quelque désir
Même encore sans le satisfaire?
A-t-il quelque ombre de plaisir?
Voilà votre importante affaire.
Qu'on a peu de temps pour jouir!
Et la jouissance est un songe.
Du néant tout semble sortir,
Dans le néant tout se replonge.
Plus d'un bel esprit nous l'a dit.
Un autre Hénault et Deshoulière,
Chapelle et Chaulieu l'ont écrit.
L'antiquité, leur devancière,
Mille fois nous en avertit,
La Sorbonne dit le contraire:
A ces messieurs rien n'est voilé;
Et quand la Sorbonne a parlé
Les beaux esprits doivent se taire.

Pray, tell the good President, that I feel greatly interested respecting both his mind and soul, both are so amiable. Mine takes the liberty to embrace your's. Adieu, Madam. Let us live as long and as well as we can.

18th

18th May, 1767.

Forgive me, Madam, for having suffered such a length of time to elapse without writing to you; you must be well assured that I shall always love you. You will say in answer to my apology, "Sir, convince me of your faith by your works; we write when we love people." All this is very true; but to write any thing agreeable, both body and soul must be at their ease, and this has been very far from the case with me. You tell me that you are dying of ennui, and I, in reply, must tell you that I have been horridly provoked. Such are the two hinges between which our existence hangs, insipidity and trouble.

I might have left out the word *horrid*—that was rather exaggerating my feelings; I ought to have said, that I had had enough to provoke me. The troubles of Geneva have deranged all my plans: I have been for some time exposed to a famine; I only wanted the plague to compleat my vexations; but an inflammation in my eyes was quite as agreeable a companion. I am now allaying my bad humour, by turning actor; I succeed tolerably well, in the part of old men, of which I am a very faithful and correct representative; and I am trying on my theatrical costume, while dictating this letter.

 You

You have, I presume, had read to you the fifteenth chapter of *Belisarius;* it is the best in the whole work, or I am no judge. But were not you astonished at the decision of the Sorbonne, which condemns this sentence—"Truth shines with its own light—men are never enlightened by flames nor funeral piles." If the Sorbonne is in the right, executioners will be the only apostles.

I cannot conceive how they dared to assert any thing so absurd and so abominable. I do not know why it is, that all companies or societies of people, say and commit much more absurd and foolish things than private people ever do; but perhaps it is because a private person has every thing to fear, and that companies are afraid of nothing. Each member casts the blame upon another.

Talking of follies—I shall very humbly present you with a folly styled *les Scythes,* of which a new edition has just been published; and I shall beg you will sit in judgment upon it, provided it is read to you, by somebody who understands how to read verse, which is almost as rare a talent as that of writing good ones.

But of all the follies that I have ever yet witnessed, surely none can exceed that of the Jesuits; they were thought to be very cunning politicians, yet they have contrived to get them-

selves turned out of three kingdoms; and worse may yet befal them. Of course, they by no means deserved the reputation they had acquired.

There is a woman, who is acquiring to herself a very great one; I mean the *Semiramis* of the north, who has sent fifty thousand men into Poland, to establish toleration and liberty of conscience. There never was a similar instance, in the history of the world, and I dare say it will have a wonderful good effect. I may boast to you of being rather in her good graces; I have, therefore, thrown down the gauntlet in her defence. I am her trusty knight, upon all occasions. I know that some people reproach her with some trifling circumstances, respecting her husband; but those are family affairs, which do not concern me; besides, it may perhaps, in her situation, be an advantage to have some errors to repair, as it will induce her to make the greatest efforts to oblige the public to grant her their esteem; at all events, she will force them to admire her; and I am well convinced, that her ugly husband would never have done any of those great things which my Catherine does every day.

I am very much inclined, Madam, by way of amusing you, to send you a little work concerning Catherine: I shall pray to God it may not

occasion you any ennui. But I think women are not sorry to hear the sex praised, and to feel convinced that we men think them capable of the greatest actions. You must know, besides, that she is going to make the tour of her vast empire. She has promised to write to me from the extremity of Asia; I shall enjoy having a letter from thence.

What a difference and what a distance there is between the Empress of Russia, and our ladies of the Marais, who never visit anybody out of their own quarter! I like every thing that is great, and I am sorry so many people of our nation should be so trifling. Yet we enjoy one very great advantage, which is, that they speak French at Astracan, and that there are professors of that language at Moscow. I think this does us more honour than our having exiled the Jesuits; though the having unkennelled those foxes will form a fine epoch in our history; but Catherine has done much more, in having reduced the clergy of her empire to receive all their salaries through her hands.

Adieu, Madam; were I at Paris, I should prefer your society to all that is done or said, either in Europe or in Asia.

12th December, 1768.

MADAM, our imagination never sleeps; no, not even were they to take, upon going to bed, a dose of the funeral sermons of the Bishop of Pay, or of the Bishop of Troyes, the d-v-l would still lull them with fair promises. When our step-mother, dame Nature, deprives us of our sight, she only paints every object in stronger colours upon our brains; of this, the Jura often gives me convincing proofs.

I am as blind as you can be, while the snow is upon my horizon, for fourteen or twenty leagues round; the d-v-ls are then more busy than ever, in rocking and lulling me, till they get me into the fool's paradise. The only exorcism which I employ against them is to drink; I drink freely, that is to say, about half a pint at every meal; and I advise you to follow my example; but let the wine be excellent; nobody in my time had any good wine in Paris.

The Abbé Boudot has had the goodness to make the most exact researches in the King's library. The result of which is, that it is very certain that at the first states of Blois, which you can hardly remember, they gave three times to the Parliament, the title of *States General upon a smaller footing*. Now I do not think the par-

liaments are by any means the representatives of the States General upon any *footing;* and even had I laid out forty thousand livres in the purchase of a place, which had given me the rank of counsellor attached to the Parliament, I should not have supposed that I composed any part of the States General of France.

But I shall not enter into this discussion, nor bring all the Parliaments of the kingdom upon my back, except the King will place me at the head of four or five regiments.

The A, B, C, is an old work translated from the English, which was printed in 1762; the style is haughty, profound, and bold: it requires to be read with attention. There are no ministers nor no bishops on this side of the Channel, whom the A, B, C, can please It is very insolent, I tell you, particularly for our French heads. If you wish to read it, you, who have a head that would suit every country, I will look out for a copy, and send it you; but remember the book is at least an inch thick. If your *grandmama* receives her letters and parcels free of expence, as her husband does, I will direct it to her.

I must relate to you a circumstance that is not known at Paris: that monkey Nicolet, who resides at Rome, has taken it into his head to canonize not only Madame de Chantal, by whom St. Francis de Sales had two children, but he has

also

also canonized a Capuchin friar, named Brother Cacufin d'Ascolé. I have seen the verbal process of his canonization, in which it is expressed that he delighted in receiving kicks of the breech, which he deemed a proof of his great humility; and that he purposely broke eggs upon, and poured pap upon his beard, that profane wretches might laugh at him, and that he made an offering to God of their railleries. However, raillery apart, Rezzonico must be a very great idiot; he is not, I presume, aware that all Europe laughs as much at Rome as at Brother Cucufin. Though I know that there are still Hottentots in Paris; but there will not be one in ten years, take my word for it.

Be that as it may, Madam, drink and sleep on; amuse yourself, as much, and in the best manner you are able; endeavour to endure life, and do not dread death, which Cicero styles the end of all our sufferings. Cicero was a man of great sense. I detest cowards and weak minds. We ought to be ashamed of placing our soul under the subjection of people who are hardly *compos mentis,* and whose stupidity would prevent us from receiving them into our household, even as grooms. Let us remember the verses of the Abbé Chaulieu.

Plus j'approche du terme, et moins je le redoute.
Sur des principes surs mon esprit affermi,

Content, persuadé, ne connaît plus doute;
Des suites de ma fin je n'ai jamais fremi.

Adieu, Madam; I shall remain attached to you till the last moment.

18th July, 1769.

My niece has told me, Madam, that you complain of my silence, and that you perceive such a devotee as myself is afraid of continuing so scandalous a correspondence, with such a profane lady as you are. You must have forgotten, Madam, that I am the avowed friend of tolerátion; and that I even give the preference to the very few in whom are now comprised the good company of Paris, to the still smaller number of the elect. Do not you know that I sent you by your *grandmama,* the letters of Amabet, I having received a few copies of them from Holland? There was one for you in the packet.

Have not I also thought of procuring you the tragedy of the *Guebres,* which is the work of a young man, who seems to have a very strong mind, and who will induce folks to forget poor me? Though I shall never forget you, Madam, while I do possess my faculties; and whenever I receive any books from abroad, I shall endea-

vour to select the best for your amusement. You will soon be tired of the Fairy Tales; notwithstanding what you say, I consider your having returned to them as a mere whim of the moment.

Have you read M. Hume's History? That may afford you plenty of occupation for three months. We ought always to lay in a good provision beforehand.

There has appeared in Holland a History of the Parliament, which is written in a very bold and nervous style; but the author does not tell us much more than we already know; the little it contains which is not generally known, hardly deserves our notice: they are merely anecdotes, taken from the register of the courts. It is very ridiculous to impute such a work to me; it appears to me to be written by the same person who, about two years ago, dirtied some paper, with some invectives against the President Henault. This is in the same style; but I am accustomed to bear the iniquities of others. In that respect, I greatly resemble you ladies, whom they often accuse of having had twenty lovers, when you have never exceeded three.

Two gentlemen, with whom you must be acquainted, the Count de Schomberg and the Marquis de Jaucourt, have invaded my retirement, and woke me from my lethargy; they are very well

well satisfied with the progress I have made in cultivating my land, and I am still more so with their wit, their refined taste, and their agreeable conversation; they are fond of the country, and I am fond of them. Oh! Madam, if you could but enjoy our superb prospects! there are none to be compared to them in Europe; but I dread the making you regret your sight. You have, however, substituted in its place, every thing that can console the mind; you are as much sought after as when you first made your entrance into life; every body is ambitious of pleasing you; you constitute the delight of all who approach you. I would very willingly be stone blind, were I permitted to end my days with you.

21st February, 1770.

I HAVE received the English Charles the Fifth, Madam; but I have not been able to read more than a few pages of it: my eyes are not at my orders, while the snow remains upon the ground. It is very strange I should obstinately persist in remaining in this country, at the certainty of being blind for four months; but the difficulty of transplanting oneself, at my age, is so great, and

and in my opinion so disagreeable, that I have never been able to come to the resolution to spend my winters in a warmer climate. I console myself by considering myself your fellow-sufferer; and as you can endure the being always blind, I thought it would be a great proof of my pusillanimity, if I could not endure to be so, for only a part of the year.

I intended to have returned you my thanks sooner, Madam; but the splashes of mud which have reached me from Geneva, have unsettled my mind during some days. They have thought proper to fire upon the people, in the streets of the holy city of Master John Calvin. Three or four people, who were quietly sitting at home in their night-gowns, have been killed upon the spot; and I who, like *Jean Jacques,* wear my night-gown all day, I am very angry to find they pay so little respect to night-caps and gowns. They have killed an old man of eighty; this has added to my vexation: you know that I am nearer eighty than seventy, and that I long to be mentioned as being fourscore years old; indeed, I think it necessary to my reputation to attain that age. You are very culpable towards me in that respect, as you wish to make me out younger than I am: you have spitefully reduced me to seventy-five and three months; this is infamous;

famous: pray allow me to be seventy-seven, to repair your fault.

They have besides either threatened or pierced with a bayonet, a woman who was with child; it is thought she will die; all this is very abominable; but their preachers say they act thus humanely, that they may have peace. It became necessary, however, to take some care of those who had been beaten, and who very prudently ran away; for notwithstanding I am a Capuchin, I feel a degree of pity for these Huguenots.

But talking of that, Madam, did you know that I was a Capuchin? It is a dignity for which I am indebted to the Duchess de Choiseul and to Saint Cacufin. See what care God takes of the elect, and what monkey tricks *grace* is apt to play, before it reaches its destination. The *general* sent me my patent from Rome. I am therefore a Capuchin, both in the spiritual and the temporal sense of the word, being besides the temporal father of the Capuchins of Gex.

Such an accession of honours has not turned my head; honours will never corrupt either my morals or my manners. You may still depend upon my attachment, Madam, just the same as if I was a man of the world, though I cannot boast of having the same good fortune which has fal-

len

len to the share of Madame de Forcalquier's Capuchin; but we cannot have every thing in this world. Receive my blessing.

+ Brother V—, an unworthy Capuchin.

25th April, 1770.

You wish to be a mole, Madam; do you know that there is a proverb, which says that moles are held up as an example? *Exemplum ut talpa.* It is true that both you and I bear some resemblance to these animals, who are supposed to be blind. I am always so while the snow covers our mountains: during that time, I do not see much more than a mole does; and besides, I shall soon visit their kingdom; nor shall I much regret leaving this upper one, though I shall greatly regret you.

You have guessed very right, Madam, when you supposed that the Abbé Terrai had taken six times as much from me as he has done from you; but he has been thus obliging to my family, as he has seized all the ready money which I had at my disposal; and I shall, probably, like a bishop, become a bankrupt when I die.

You wish to have this pretended Encyclopædia, which is not one; it is a work which is, unfortunately,

unfortunately, (at least I believe so) very wise and very tiresome, (that I affirm). I shall be dead before it will be published, since of my two booksellers, the one is become a magistrate and an ambassador, and the other is continually mounting guard, in his quality of major, in that apology for a republic named Geneva.

However, Madam, that you may not accuse me of negligence, here are three sheets, which have just come to hand. Desire them to read to you the articles—Adam and Adultery. Our first father must be interesting to every body, and adultery always affords a subject of amusement to the female sex. You may also have read to you the article Adoration, as I have entered into some curious details under that head, which are not to be met with in any other work.

When you have either amused or wearied yourself with these sheets, do not forget, I intreat you, to scold your grandmama most horridly. She has done me the greatest favours; has dignified me with the title of Capuchin; has made a gentleman of my friend, a captain of artillery, upon my sole recommendation, without having had any previous acquaintance with him; she has bestowed a pension upon a physician, that I do not know much more of, and whom I never consult; and, what is far better, she has written me several most charming letters:

ters: but she is become both cruel and perfidious; she has abandoned me in my greatest distress, when I was most in want of her assistance, for the establishment of a manufactory which I have taken under my protection.

It is the finest enterprise that has been set on foot upon the Mount Jura, since its existence: it is far superior to my silk manufactory. I am serving the state, increasing the numbers of the King's subjects, and even affording the Abbé Terrai a supply of money; and yet no one returns me thanks; my letters remain unanswered, I am laughed at, and by none more so than by the husband of Madame Gargantua: such is the dependance that may be placed upon the great of this world. I agree, they have something more to do, than to trouble their heads about me or my Mount Jura; but they might write me a line, were it only to encourage and console such a poor soul.

Therefore, Madam, scold your *grandmama*, if you can; for I am told that no one has the courage to do so. Take care of your health, at all events; let me enjoy that consolation. Of what avail is my attachment and my respect, since I am in the bosom of Mount Jura, and you are at St. Joseph? To be at such a distance, to people who think, is dreadful.

Brother Francis.

Ferney,

Ferney, 5th May, 1776.

I AM an ungrateful wretch, Madam, unworthy of you and of your grandmama. I do not deserve to live; indeed, I can hardly be said to enjoy life, as I am still blind, since it snows here on the 5th of May.

Oui, j'ai tort si je vous ai dit
Qu'elle n'était qu'une volage,
Fière du brillant avantage
De sa beauté, de son esprit,
Et se moquant de l'esclavage
De tous ceux qu'elle assujettit:
Cette image est trop révoltante;
Je crois qu'on peut la définir:
Une adorable indifférente,
Faisant du bien pour son plaisir

Imagine to yourself, Madam, that while I was calling your *grandmama* inconstant, fickle, and cruel, she was, with her usual gentleness, heaping favours upon me; she is not satisfied with taking my watchmakers under her protection, she has even extended it towards my sculptor. I cannot suffer myself to dwell upon this last proof of her kindness towards me; because though I ought to be very grateful, there is no need for me

me to be vain. I do not know whether she has just now much time to spare, Madam, but have you, who, notwithstanding you have retired from the world, are still running after its pleasures?

I send you the article *Ame*,* which you may throw in the fire, if it does not please you. Your *grandmama* may tell you, if she pleases, what her pretty soul is like; as for me, I never knew what sort of a thing that was, and you will perceive that I am more ignorant than ever in that respect. If you wish to learn ignorance, I am your man. I only write to you, and not to your *grandmama;* I should be ashamed to address her.

Though I think I may have the boldness to ask a favour of her some days hence, if I can summon sufficient courage, after my recent injustice towards her—but to the point.

Before the Jesuits were banished their cloisters, they had an establishment almost at my door, formed for the purpose of converting the Huguenots. To this they had just made a great addition, having purchased, at a very low price, some lands belonging to seven brothers and two sisters, seven of whom were minors, and all of whom were ruined. The brothers were all in the King's service; the youngest was thirteen,

* Soul or mind.

 and

and the eldest five-and-twenty. The Jesuits' attorney, who is the greatest rogue that I ever met with, obtained an order of council, which gave them absolute possession of the land of these poor children, for now and ever more. They came to seek my protection; I became their Don Quixote; they recovered their land, and I had the satisfaction of out-witting the wily Jesuits, before they were ordered to troop, pack and baggage. I never was better pleased.

The eldest of these brothers has a favour to ask, and he means to go to Versailles during the holidays. He does not mean to address himself to the Abbé Terray, as it is not respecting money, which M. l'Abbé throws out of the windows; indeed, I hardly know what it is he requires, and I positively dare not become his interpreter to your *grandmama.* You may mention him to her if you please; but as for me, God forbid; I have already put her goodness to the test much too often. Not long since she displayed her benevolence towards my son-in-law Dupuits; I positively ought to go and hide myself, when I think of all her kindness towards me. But it is to you, Madam, that I am chiefly indebted for the favour of her notice, which has shed a most odoriferous balm upon my latter days: you presented me to your grandmama, whom I had never before had the advantage of admiring;

admiring; it is to you that I am indebted for her *shoe* and her letters: she made me a Capuchin; I owe her everything. May you long enjoy the delight of her friendship and the charms of her conversation!

When I meet with any article relative to *belles lettres*, less tiresome than those respecting metaphysics, I shall do myself the honour to send them to you. All we have to do in this world is, to endeavour to reach the end of the day without pain and without ennui; and this is no very easy task. I am your's, Madam, till my last breath, and as anxious (though more hopeless than ever) to see you. Brother Francis.

Ferney, 18th June, 1770.

I do what I can, Madam, in this desert, to afford you some minutes of amusement at St. Joseph; and, even at the risk of wearying you, I send you two detached sheets. Pray, impose silence upon your reader, the moment you feel inclined to yawn.

I am quite ignorant respecting what is going forward in the world; I do not even know whether Lacedemon belongs to Catherine II. or to Mustapha. I do not know where your *grandmama* is, and yet that interests me much the mo t.

If she is in her palace at Chanteloup, occupying herself with her flourishing colony, I pronounce her to be a philosopher. I mean by this word a practical philosopher; since it is not sufficient to merely think correctly, to explain yourself with elegance, to trample under foot the prejudices of so many weak women, and of as many silly men, to be thoroughly acquainted with the world, and consequently to despise it; but to withdraw oneself from the crowd, merely that we may do the more good, and that we may encourage arts and manufactures, to rise even superior to our rank, by our actions and by the elevation of our mind—this is being really and truly a philosopher.

I pity you both for not being able to go together to that terrestrial paradise, Chanteloup. I must always consider myself as greatly indebted to you, Madam, for all the favours she has shewn me, since, but for you, she might never have known me. From the new colony of Carthage*, she deigns to cast a favourable regard towards the colony of my hamlet; each succeeding day she enables me to enjoy the pleasure of being grateful. I flatter myself that she was in her

* The small town of Versoix, which was then building, upon the Lake of Geneva, under the protection of M. de Choiseul, under the name of Choiseul-bourg.

kingdom

kingdom at the time the *Badauts** of Paris were killing themselves, in their eagerness to enjoy a holiday, near her hotel; she would have been too sensibly afflicted upon the dreadful occasion. Is it possible that men can be such fools, as to risk their lives to see a few crackers let off?

Adieu, Madam; take great care of your health: mine has left me in despair. Your's, most respectfully.

2d September, 1770.

I SEND you, Madam, under cover to your *grandmama*, a short work in favour of the Divinity, and in answer to the volume *upon the System of Nature*, which you have never read, I am well convinced; since, let the subject be never so interesting, I know you would not expose yourself to a moment's ennui, for the world; and this terrible book extends to too great a length, and contains too many repetitions for you to be able to read, or rather to listen to it, with any pleasure. Your taste must be first consulted: the author who amuses you the most, no matter what he writes about, will always be the most in favour with you. If I do not succeed in amusing

 you,

* Nickname, which answers to Cockney for a Londoner.

you, at all events, I shall not occasion you a great deal of ennui, as I have contrived to answer two large volumes in twenty pages.

I flatter myself that your *grandmama* is at last reconciled to Catherine II. Such a profusion of Ottoman blood must have washed away that of a drunkard, who would have buried her in a convent; and, after all, my *Kitty* is far superior to Mustapha. Acknowledge, Madam, that in the bottom of your heart you approve of her conduct.

Some letters from Vienna say, that those rabble of Mussulmen have killed the ambassador of France, and almost all his suite; that the English ambassador made his escape, disguised like a sailor; and that Mustapha has appointed a guard of a thousand Janissaries for the protection of the bailiff of Venice. I will not believe this extraordinary news; but if, unfortunately, it should prove to be fact, I am sure even your *grandmama* would put up a prayer that Catherine might be crowned at Constantinople.

The King of Prussia is gone into Moravia, to pay the Emperor a familiar visit. There seems at present a degree of cordiality among the Christian princes, which does not seem to extend to their ministers.

I have now told you, Madam, all that the *old hermit* knows, who begins to tremble at perceiving

ceiving the days grow shorter, and the winter drawing near. Take care of yourself, preserve your gaiety, your imagination, and your kindness for your very old and very puling servant, who continues as tenderly attached to you as ever.

29th July, 1771.

God be praised, Madam, your *grandmama* does me justice, and so do you. I am no longer afraid of displeasing an amiable, just, and beneficent soul, because I have raised my voice against those mischievous and unjust beings, who are always a burthen to society, and, in the exercise of their functions, are sometimes seditious and sometimes assassins.

I am at an age, and in a situation, when one may speak the truth: I have always spoke it, without expecting anything from anybody; and you may depend upon it, I shall never ask a favour of anybody, at least for myself: hitherto, I have only been a petitioner for others.

If Mr. Walpole is at Paris, I beg you will give him to read page 76 of the sheet I send you: I have said a few words about him. I have considered his opinion as an authority, and his expressions as a model. This sheet is detached

from the seventh volume of Questions respecting the Encyclopædia, with which you neither are nor chuse to be acquainted. The six first volumes have already gone into four editions; so has that large Dictionary which is in the Bastile. It is in prison in its native country; but all Europe are *encyclopædiasts*. You will answer me as one of Corneille's heroines does Flaminius.

> Le monde sous vos lois! ah, vous me feriez peur,
> S'il ne s'en fallait pas l'Arménie et mon cœur!

Do not confound, I beseech you, mere tinsel with real gold. I do not attempt to defend all the alloy which they have mixed with some very good and very sound philosophy. We do justice to those who have displayed useful truths; let us be, what the Parliament ought to be, equitable and without party-spirit; let us unite ourselves in that holy religion, which requires us, above all things, to be just, and never to see, at least if we can help it, things otherwise than as they are.

If you condescend to listen to the sheet I send you, (which is merely a printer's proof sheet), you will perceive that I have trampled under foot all historical prejudices.

There are others articles upon taste, full of translations in verse, of some of the best pieces of English and Italian poetry. These might have amused

amused you formerly; but you have treated everything concerning the Encyclopædia as you have treated my Empress Catherine. You have turned Turk, that you may not be of my opinion.

You must acknowledge, that the Encyclopædia is read at Moscow, and that the fleets of Archangel are in the Grecian Seas; that Catherine has humbled the most formidable empire, without levying any taxes upon her subjects; while, after nine years peace, they seize our government-securities, without repaying us our money; and they have imposed a tax of ten per cent. upon the revenues of widows and orphans.

Apropos to justice, Madam; you, of course, recollect the four epistles upon the laws of nature? I mention them, because a foreign prelate, being at my house, told me that he had not only translated them—he had also preached them. I told him, in reply, that M. Pasquier, the oracle of the Parliament, had caused them to be burnt by the hands of the Parliamentary executioner. He assured me he would burn Pasquier, if he ever set his foot in his diocese.

30th July, 1773.

You have certainly felt very much offended, Madam, at my not having written to you, at least to thank you for having introduced me to M. Delisle, whose understanding and whose sincere regard for you ought to have spurred me on to address you in his praise; since I cannot pretend to say, that the crowd of princes and princesses of Savoy and Lorraine, or of Lorraine and Savoy, who have astonished the Swiss by their influence, have taken up my time; nor have I been at any of the balls or feasts which the still more surprised Genevians have thought fit to treat them with: you will believe, that all this bustle was very ill suited to my turn of mind; yet I have not had a moment to spare, and I will tell you what has so fully employed my time.

The relatives of M. de Lally, who find themselves in a very awkward and very disagreeable situation, have taken it into their heads that I might be of some service to his memory; they have therefore sent me their papers, and I have been obliged to study and reflect upon this complicated lawsuit, which lasted three years, and ended at last so fatally.

I have discovered that there were no more proofs against him than against les Calas, and that

that the assassins of the Chevalier la Barre were as guilty of having shed the blood of Lally, as of having murdered that unfortunate young man.

But well aware that the public would not now feel the least interest in Lally's lawsuit, that all is forgotten after a time, and that people no longer care about either Louis XIV. or Henry IV. and that novelty is necessary to rouse the curiosity of the French, I have written a summary account of the Revolutions of India, which I conclude, as I ought to do, with the fatal catastrophe of Lally.

This, Madam, has occupied me night and day; and though I am near eighty, I have found it to be the most difficult task that I ever imposed upon myself.

Possibly, indifferent as you appear to be with respect to the things of this world, you are by no means interested in what has passed in India, and in the Parliament; our mistakes and our disasters, either at Pondicherry or at Paris, will probably not affect you; therefore, I shall not venture to send you this little work, though it is merely written to be read by the very few people who, like you, can boast of possessing common sense, and who are as fond as you are of truth.

I have sat in judgment upon the living and the dead. I have composed an historical summary respecting M. de Morangies' lawsuit;

and

and I am no more of the same opinion as the Judges of the Palace were, than I have ever been of the same opinion as the Parliament, respecting everything they have done since the time of la Fronde, except when they thought fit to exile the Jesuits. But, depend upon it, you shall neither be troubled with Morangies nor Lally, except you positively order me to send them to you.

And I could wish to make this farther bargain with you,—that you will not require me to send them, except you are inclined to think as I do respecting both these suits. But that would be requiring too much of you. Those people whom we chuse for judges, ought to be allowed perfect liberty of conscience, and we should not induce their feelings to revolt against us by our excess of enthusiasm.

I should like to have your opinion; but I wish to bring you over to mine by the force of truth; therefore, I shall not request you would shew me any favour. All that I dread is your ennui; but, after all, my Revolutions will be as amusing as many of the Paris daily publications, and certainly more so than those miserable public papers which you listen to, when you have no better mode of employing your time.

I think there is a novel entitled *The Amusing Days;* these are certainly only to be met with in

in a novel. *Happy Days* might be the title of some still more ridiculous fabulous tale. You deserve to enjoy the latter; but you must content yourself with a few fleeting moments of bliss. I should be sure of some hours of pleasure, if I were but near enough to see and converse with you.

Ferney, 13th August, 1775.

I AM afraid, Madam, that you do not feel more interested for our Indians than for many of our French. You have written me that you have thrown your cap beyond the Boulevards; but it has not reached the Indies. As for me, I must acknowledge that I am rather curious respecting a people to whom we are indebted for our cyphers, our backgammon, our chess, our first principles of geometry, and for various fables, which have become our own; since the one upon which Milton has built his singular poem, is taken from an old Indian book, written about five thousand years ago.

You must be sensible how much this enlarges our sphere. I think, that when one crawls in a little corner of our western Europe, and when one has not more than two days to live, we derive great consolation from suffering our ideas

to

to revert to antiquity, and in letting them extend themselves about six thousand leagues from our burrow.

Yet it is very possible, that the description of a country, into which Colonel Clive has penetrated much farther than Alexander ever did, may not greatly amuse you; what it was so very necessary for our defunct East India Company to be acquainted with, may strike you as being very insipid. At all events, you need not listen to the beginning of this work, as you may take it up at the adventures of poor Lally, his criminal suit, his condemnation, and his gag.

From time to time, we treat Europe with some very strange shews, which might induce foreigners to believe that we were a most barbarous and a most savage nation, if we had not acquired the reputation of being the most gay and the most frivolous people upon earth.

Ferney, 1st November, 1773.

Well, Madam, I shall begin with these brilliant diamonds, page 102, volume the first—" Why make of God an eastern tyrant? Why make him punish light faults with eternal sufferings? Why place the name of the Almighty under the picture of the devil?"

Page 107.—" We are astonished at the absurdity of the Pagan religion: posterity will be still more astonished at the absurdity of the Popish religion."

Page 121.—" To be a philosopher, said Mallebranche, it is necessary to have occular demonstration before we believe; but to be one of the faithful, we must place a blind belief in everything. Mallebranche was not aware that he made a fool of his devotee."

Page 321.—" Why do monks, who are even passionately zealous in defence of the false miracles of their founder, place no faith in ghosts? Because it is not to their interest to believe in their existence. Put interest out of the question, and only reason remains, and reason is not credulous."

I have selected these little diamonds by chance, Madam; there are a thousand similar strokes, which both delighted and surprised me; but this does not prevent the work from being very bad. I spend my life in seeking jewels in a dunghill; and when I meet with any, I lay them on one side, and turn them to my advantage; by which means, I sometimes render even the worst books useful.

I read, not very long since, the *Art of Love,* by Bernard, which is one of the most tiresome tedious poems that ever was written; yet there

is

is in this said poem about thirty admirable lines, as worthy to be handed down to posterity as the subject the author has chosen.

To write a good book requires a prodigious length of time, and the patience of a saint: to say excellent things, in a very flat work, we have only to give the reins to our imagination. This mad fool, whom we always keep in pay, has sometimes very lucid intervals: so much for Helvetius.

With respect to the Panegyric of Colbert, it was a work that could only be composed with a due regard to arithmetic; therefore a very honest banker obtained the prize. I must acknowledge, that I cannot bear to hear a man, who wears a coat of the cloth of *Vanrobais*, or of the velvet of Lyons, whose legs are set off with silk stockings, and who has a diamond ring on his finger, and a repeating-watch in his pocket, say anything against John Colbert, to whom we are indebted for all these luxuries.

It is the fashion of the day to despise Colbert and Louis XIV. This will soon blow over, and these two men will be cited by posterity as often as Racine and Boileau.

After having imparted to you my useless ideas respecting objects of mere curiosity, I return to something mose essential, namely, your health and situation, as I feel the most lively interest in both.

both. Old age is making rapid advances; upon this point I can speak feelingly; but at eighty, old Time begins to grow very rude and very impertinent: we shall first lose the faculty of thinking, and next our wish for food. We shall render to the four elements what we have received from them, after having suffered some time through their interference, and after having been frequently agitated by fear and hope, during the two minutes we may have been said to live. You are younger than me; therefore, according to the ordinary course of nature, I shall precede you to the grave.

M. de Lisle was joking, when he said he found me in good health. I never did enjoy a good state of health; I hardly know what health is, except by hearsay; I never passed a day entirely free from pain; I can hardly conceive what sort of people those are who are in perfect health, as one never can form a very just idea of what one has never experienced: this is why I am persuaded that it is impossible for a physician to have any real knowledge respecting fevers, or any other complaints, if he has never laboured under any of them.

You have quoted two fine verses of M. de Saint Lambert's: they have made the greater impression upon you, because they have recalled your own situation, and that of your friends, to

your recollection. The only way to render verses admired, is to write them so that they may be applied to every situation in which mankind are likely to find themselves. These two lines of the Abbé Chaulieu's,

> Bonne au manvaise santé
> Fait notre philosophie,

will be handed down to the remotest posterity, because everybody has felt the truth of them.

What you have written me respecting Madame de la Valliere both surprises and afflicts me; but if she is only weak, her complaint may not be so dangerous. Wine was invented solely to afford us strength. I can suppose that her situation greatly afflicts you. You complain of having no courage; which is as much as to say, I am not devoid of feeling; since those who have the courage to hear unmoved of the demise or illness of their friends, are, in my opinion, monsters, or else blocks of stone, I admire you, on the contrary, for your feeling: while we are sensible to the misfortunes of our friends, we are in the full enjoyment of all our faculties. May you, Madam, be long troubled with this weakness of soul of which you complain. I shall die without having had the satisfaction of spending another hour in

 your

your company: this I consider as a real misfortune, and extremely discouraging.

My soul (if I have one) is tenderly attached to your's; but to what purpose?

16th November, 1773.

You absolutely insist, Madam, upon my telling you whether I am satisfied with a work, in which the bad predominates to the full as much as the good, since there are as many obscure as there are clear propositions, as many improper words as there are correct expressions, and to the full as much exaggeration as truth: therefore, what would you have me say in answer to your question? I presume you think as I do, and I have the vanity to believe that I think as you do. They say it is the best work that has ever been written upon the same subject. This does not surprise me: the subject is very difficult to treat, and by no means favourable to eloquence.

As for the diamonds which have been found in the strong-box of a man who is no more, I must acknowledge they are very badly set; I think I have told you so. It requires my perseverance, and the eager thirst which I have to glean instruction at the close of my life, to search as I do for precious stones in a dung heap. Per-

haps the only advantage which our century can boast of having over the last is, that even in our worst books, you may discover some beauties. n the time of Paschal, Boileau, and Racine, bad books were absolutely good for nothing; instead of which, the most detestable works now-a-days have a bright side.

I discovered more genius in M. Guibert's tactics, than in his tragedy, and even more boldness of style. What has delighted me is, that this professor of the art of assassinating people, appears, in society, to be the most polite and the most gentle of men.

You talk to me of *pebbles*, Madam. Well! I send you a little *pebble* out of my garden, which is certainly not so valuable as M. Guibert's jewels. I am astonished that the same man should have been able to have written two such different works.

Neither Marshall Saxe nor Marshall Turenne would ever have written tragedies. I ought certainly to have given the preference to the tragedy, to a work upon the art of killing men; I even think, that were it rather more worked up, it might be rendered a very regular and a very interesting piece; and I most cordially detest the art of war; nevertheless I admire his tactics. Admiration is, they say, the offspring of ignorance; this is why you admire so few things with respect

respect to their wit. I do not expect you will approve of my *pebble*, you will be tempted to throw it out of the window; but remember I merely wished to afford you a moment's amusement, and that I have sent you my *tactic* before I sent it to the great M. Guibert.

May I request you will inform me how Madame de la Valliere does. You are, I hope, in good health; Nature has been sufficiently cruel to you, to leave you in repose. She persecutes me most horribly; but I hold fast.

2d December, 1774.

You have given me a most difficult commission, Madam. Every body can write *mischievous* Christmas carols, because every body likes them; but there never has been any Christmas carols written in praise of anybody, not even of the holy family, whom all worthy Christians have agreed to turn into ridicule at the end of December. However, to satisfy your strange eagerness, I have invoked the shade of the Abbé Pellegrin, and I subjoin the staves which he has sent you; merely requesting that you would not give up the name of the author, not alas!

for the sake of your eyes, but for the sake of your much attached old *Pellegrin.*

Christmas carols to be sung after supper.

Jésus dans sa cabane
Voyant venir Choiseul,
Malgré le bœuf et l'âne,
Lui faisant grand accueil,
Dit : Je fais avec toi
Un pacte de famille ;
Tu sais garder le foi,
Et moi
Je ne quitterai pas
Tes pas
Pour chercher une fille.

Quand madame se femme
Vint baiser le bambin,
Marie au fond de l'ame
Eut un peu de chagrin ;
Cette bonne lui dit :
J'ai quelque jalousie.
Lorsque le Saint-Esprit
Me prit,
Vous n'étiez donc pas là ?
Là, là ;
Il vous aurait choisie.

L'enfant dans l'écurie,
D'un œil peu satisfait,
Voyait Marthe et Marie
Et sainte Elisabeth,

Et

Et ses parens sans nom,
Et Joseph le beau-père;
Mais en voyant Grammont,
Poupon,
Tu criais: Celle-là,
Papa,
Est ma sœur ou ma mère.

When these three verses have been sung, the following, which is to the full as flat, may be sung in chorus.

Laissez paître vos bêtes,
Vous, Messieurs, qui ne l'êtes pas:
A nos petites fêtes
Ne vous ennuyez pas.
Votre châteaux
Est grand et beau;
Mais à Paris
Toujours chéris,
Faut-il ailleurs
Gagner des cœurs?
Laissez paître vos bêtes,
Vous, Messieurs, qui ne l'êtes pas, etc.

2d December, 1774.

The shade of the Abbé Pellegrin appeared to me again during the night, and gave me two verses, composed to the tune of

Or, dites-nous, Marie.

Trois Rois dans la cuisine
Vinrent de l'Orient ;
Une Etoile divine
Marchait toujours devant.
Cette Etoile nouvelle
Les fit très-mal loger :
Joseph et sa pucelle
N'avaient rien à manger.

Hélas ! mes pauvres Sires,
Pourquoi voyagez-vous ?
Restez dans vos Empires,
Ou soupez avec nous,
Si la Cour vous ennuie,
Voyez-nous quelquefois :
La bonne compagnie
Doit toujours plaire aux Rois.

"My dear Abbé," said I, "your style greatly reminds me of that of the author of those famous carols," which ran thus—

Lisez la Loi et les Prophètes,
Profitez de ce qu'ils ont dit.
Quand on a perdu Jesus Christ,
Adieu, panier, vendanges sont faites.

But after all, your verses for the supper at St. Joseph may pass muster, because the good company of whom you speak, and with whom you

you are but little acquainted, are sure to be very indulgent. If there are any allusions in your carols, they must be pleasing to those who are interested in them, and at all events they cannot be offensive even to the Holy Virgin and her husband, who never piqued themselves upon having at Bethleém, as good a cook as the President Henault can boast of having: but let me advise you not to shew your carols to the ingenious Freron, who has obtained admittance at the Marchioness du Deffand's, as he would abuse both her cook and her carol-makers; though he neither understands what good cheer is, much less what are good verses.

8th December.

Carols, to the tune of, *Or, dites-nous, Marie.*

Il devait venir boire
Un jour à Saint-Joseph;
Mais au bord de la Loire
Il prit sa route en bref.

Tous les cœurs les suivirent,
Car il les avait tous;
En soupirant ils dirent:
Nous partons avec vous.

On

On pleurait en silence
Quand femme et sœur partit ;
Plus de chant, plus de danse,
Et surtout plus d'esprit.

Les voilà qui reviennent ;
Tout change en un moment :
Que tous nos maux obtiennent
Un pariel changement.

To the tune, *Joseph et Marie.*

Rions tous en ce séjour ;
On ne rit guère à la Cour.
Goûtons le bon temps si rare
Que cette Cour nous prepare :
On dit qu'il revient ce temps
Où tous les cœurs sont contens.

Aurore des jours heureux,
Répandez de nouveaux feux.
Le bonheur qui nous enchante
Se flétrit, s'il ne s'augmente.
Il faut toujours ajouter
Aux biens qu'on a pu goûter.

They may then sing—

Laissez paître vos bêtes,
Vous, Messieurs, qui ne l'êtes pas ;
A nos petites fêtes
Ne vous ennuyez pas.
Votre château, etc.

When

When ladies order their mantua-makers to make them a * *pet-en-l'air,* they take care to be very particular in their directions respecting how it is to be made; and you, Madam, ought to have specified your orders respecting the carols, and have told me that you did not chuse I should introduce either the manger, Jesus, nor the Virgin Mary, though these form the most essential parts of a Christmas carol. Since you ought to have known, that with respect to such *sacred songs,* there is no salvation out of the pale of the church. It was impossible, therefore, for me to guess what you required; ladies are generally very despotic; but they ought at least to declare their will. These verses are by no means so good as the others. They seem made for a country-wake; but they may do for a piano-forte, which is a mere tin kettle in comparison to a harpsichord. Besides, you must not take it in your head that every subject is suitable to these little common tunes, nor that folks can guess, when a hundred leagues off, the apropos of the moment, especially when they have the most cruel concern in hand, in comparison to which, all the broils of the court are mere bunches of roses.

---

* Jacket and petticoat.

30th

30th March, 1775.

It is very possible, Madam, that I may have written you, *that I had been very ill, and that I was so still,*

1st. Because I spoke the truth.

2d. Because the expression is in absolute conformity to our academical decision.

This may appear very pedantic, Madam, but you drew me on to make this apology; and you may do any thing with me but *draw* me to Paris. My imagination often conveys me thither, because you are there, but my reason tells me that I must end my days at Ferney.

One ought to retire from the world, when one has lost the use of half ones body and soul, to make room for younger folks. There is, and there always will be, in Paris, many young people, who do compose, and who ever will compose, very pretty verses; but it is not enough to do this, they ought to have a *je ne scais quoi,* to induce people to learn them by heart, and to read them again and again in spite of their teeth, since if they cannot boast of this merit, to write them is mere labour lost.

I have been very angry of late years, with the prose of Paris, but particularly with the prose of their lawyers, who have by no means improved

proved their style since the time of master Petit-Jean. The memorials or pleas against M. de Guines and M. de Richelieu, are absurd beyond measure: that of M. de Richelieu was rather tiresome; but it had at least the merit of being very reasonable.

I hope when my young * man is under the necessity of composing one, it will be rather more interesting; but probably he will not be called upon to do so for many years.

Adieu, Madam; let me recommend dissipation to you; continue to give suppers, only take care not to trespass too much upon your digestion, as that might prevent your sleeping; continue to mix in that world which you *continue* to charm, and reserve me a little corner of your heart, which may console me for being so very far distant.

26th November, 1775.

Since, Madam, you say to M. d'Argental :—

Atis comble d'honneurs n'aime plus Sangaride,

I may say to you :—

Eglé ne m'aime plus, et n'a rien à me dire.

* The young d'Etallonde, for whom Voltaire was greatly interested.

For

For I am as fond of Quinault as you are: I am not one of the pedants who think him insipid, and who condemn him for having talked of love when he ought to have done so. I look upon him as the second of our poets, with respect to elegance, simplicity, truth, and precision.

It is very certain that you can have nothing more to say to me, since you do not write to me; but it is by no means true that I am overwhelmed by honours. Though I have been rendered very ridiculous, and it is always our friends who hold us up in this pleasant light.

M. d'Argental persists in believing that my sort of apoplectic fit proceeded from my having overeat myself; when, in fact, it came on in consequence of my having fasted much longer than usual. He is also pleased to style me a commissary, deputed by the King to assist the farmers-general, when, in fact, I am sorely oppressed by those gentlemen. Shall I speak the truth? my jurisdiction will very soon extend no farther than the grave, since I am upon the point of reaching that bourne, from whence no one returns.

I am reading all Cicero's philosophical works upon this subject; but I do not advise you to follow my example; for though this great man is very eloquent, he does not afford me any instruction.

The

The Abbé de Chaulieu was exactly my age when he died, and he was as ignorant as I am.

As I thought my fit might be attended with very serious consequences, I did not chuse to set out upon my last journey, without taking the liberty of bidding adieu to your *grandmama*. As we ought to depart in peace with every one; the injustice of her husband laid heavy at my heart, as he seemed to think me very ungrateful. I was very far from being so: but I have had no greater success with your *grandmama* than I have had with you: you overwhelm me with honours, and she thinks me caution personified, and laughs at my honours, and at my apoplexy.

But I leave you to judge whether, situated as I have been, I can have had any thing very amusing to say to you? I neither know any thing respecting the comic opera, nor respecting the assembly of the clergy.

You, Madam, who live in the centre of all the diversions, and all the bustle of the great world, how can you suppose that a poor hermit, living in a desert, and surrounded by snow and ice, deprived of all society, and almost of his senses, can summon courage enough to write to you, who are still in the full possession of four of yours?

It is you who ought to rouse people who are sleeping upon the borders of their grave; but they

they have no right to importune you with their reveries; they ought to be discreet, and to wait for your orders. Don Calmet's ghosts are the only people who came to torment the living.

But, be assured, that though I have outlived every thing which attached me to existence, my passions, my amusements, my imagination, and all the other trifles I once so highly prized, I shall never outlive my regard for you, as I shall continue to admire and esteem you as long as my apoplectic fits will suffer me to remain here, since I consider you as the person of the age, who is the most after my own heart, and the most according to my taste, admitting I have any taste or feeling remaining. Be that as it may, I must request the continuance of your regard, because it is my greatest consolation, and I shall die while saying—Had I had my wish, I should have began and ended my life in her society.

FINIS.

Lane, Darling & Co. Leadenhall Street.